Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of English Language and Literature
British Cultural Studies Programme

OTHERING NATURE IN THE AUSTRALIAN NOVEL: POSTCOLONIAL ECOCRITCAL READING OF KATE GRENVILLE'S *THE SECRET RIVER* AND KIM SCOTT'S *THAT DEADMAN DANCE*

Elif ŞAHİN

Master's Thesis

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YAYIMLAMA VE FİKRİ MÜLKİYET HAKLARI BEYANI

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- Tezimle ilgili gizlilik kararı verilmiştir. (3)

……/……/……

Elif ŞAHİN

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ABSTRACT

ŞAHİN, Elif. Othering Nature in the Australian Novel: Postcolonial Ecocritical Reading of Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* and Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance*. MA Thesis, Ankara, 2021.

This thesis aims to discuss the destructive impact of British imperialism on colonised lands and its inhabitants through Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* (2005) and Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance* (2010) within the scope of postcolonial ecocriticism theory. The anthropocentric discourses of the colonial mind-set not only controlled the social, cultural, and economic aspects of the colonies, but also dominated their natural environments and destroyed the balance of their ecosystem. Anthropocentrism, which is an ideology that has a tendency to 'other' natural environments by claiming the superiority of humans, justified the colonisers' manipulation of nature in order to gain economic profit. Pertaining these issues, postcolonial ecocriticism theory aims to analyse the impact of European imperialism and the anthropocentric discourses on non-white people and their environments. Within this context, Australia, as a settler colony, provides powerful material on this subject. Both the Australian land and the Aboriginal people were relentlessly subjected to the anthropocentric discourses and the colonial ideologies. Both *The Secret River* and *That Deadman Dance* emphasise the human induced hazards to nature, which stem from the settlers' desire for economic profit. Kate Grenville, as a white Australian, illustrates the settler side of history and the errors in her ancestors' ideologies. Kim Scott, on the other hand, highlights the Aboriginal side of history as an Australian Noongar himself. Although the ancestries of these two novels' authors are different, their main concern is similar. It is emphasised in both of the novels that the white settlers biologically and environmentally expanded through hunting, agriculture, clearing forests, planting foreign seeds and infectious diseases, while disturbing the balance of Australia's nature for the sake of their own economic and political advantages, which eventually led to the 'othering' of nature and its inhabitants.

Key Words

Postcolonial Ecocriticism Theory, Kate Grenville, *The Secret River*, Kim Scott, *That Deadman Dance*, Anthropocentrism

ÖZET

ŞAHİN, Elif. Avustralya Romanında Doğanın Ötekileştirilmesi: Kate Grenville'in *The Secret River* ve Kim Scott'un *That Deadman Dance* Eserlerinin Sömürgecilik Sonrası Eko-eleştirel Okuması. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2021.

Bu tez, Kate Grenville'in *The Secret River* (2005) ve Kim Scott'un *That Deadman Dance* (2010) eserlerini sömürgecilik dönemi sonrası eko-eleştirel teori kapsamında inceleyerek İngiliz sömürgeciliğinin koloni topraklarının ve yerlilerin üzerindeki yıkıcı etkilerini tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Sömürgecilik zihniyetinin insan merkezci söylemleri, kolonilerin sosyal, kültürel ve ekonomik kontrolünü sağlamakla kalmamış, aynı zamanda onların doğal çevrelerinde de hüküm sürmüş ve ekosistemlerini tahrip etmiştir. İnsanlığın üstünlüğünü savunarak doğayı 'ötekileştirme' eğilimi olan insan merkezcilik, sömürgecilerin ekonomik kârı için doğanın manipülasyonunu meşrulaştırmıştır. Bununla ilişkin olarak, sömürgecilik dönemi sonrası eko-eleştirel teori, Avrupa sömürgeciliğinin ve insan merkezci söylemlerin beyaz olmayan insanlar ve onların doğal çevreleri üzerindeki etkilerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, yerleşimci bir sömürge olan Avustralya, bu konuyla ilgili oldukça güçlü bilgiler sağlamaktadır. Hem Avustralya toprakları hem de oranın yerlileri olan Aborijinler insan merkezci söylemlere ve sömürgeci ideolojilere amansızca maruz kalmışlardır. *The Secret River* ve *That Deadman Dance* romanları, İngiliz yerleşimcilerin ekonomik kâr arzularından dolayı doğaya yapılan insan kaynaklı zararları vurgulamaktadır. Kate Grenville, bir beyaz Avustralyalı olarak, Avustralya tarihinin yerleşimci tarafını ve atalarının ideolojilerindeki hataları yansıtmıştır. Kim Scott ise, bir Noongar Aborijin olarak, sömürgecilik tarihinin Aborijin tarafını vurgulamıştır. Bu romanların yazarlarının soyları birbirinden farklı olmasına rağmen, değindikleri ana konular birbirine benzemektedir. İki eserde de beyaz yerleşimcilerin avlanarak, ormanları yok ederek, toprağa yabancı tohumlar ekerek, tarım yaparak, bulaşıcı hastalıklar yayarak ve kendi ekonomik ve politik çıkarlarını gözeterek nasıl biyolojik ve ekolojik olarak yayıldıkları, Avustralya doğasının düzenini nasıl bozdukları ve bunun sonucunda da doğanın ve yerlilerin nasıl 'ötekileştirildiği' vurgulanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Sömürgecilik Dönemi Sonrası Eko-Eleştirel Teori, Kate Grenville, *The Secret River,* Kim Scott, *That Deadman Dance*, İnsan Merkezcilik

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INTRODUCTION

History witnessed many examples of the domination of western imperialists such as British ones over non-white cultures. The impact of imperialist ideologies on the colonised and colonies has been studied very much so far; however, their impact upon the natural environment in colonised lands has often been overlooked. The general discourse towards the world has always been anthropocentric; hence, more attention should be paid to the importance of the non-human world. Actually, postcolonial ecocriticism, by bringing together postcolonial and ecocritical studies, fills the gap of the discussion about the impact of British imperialism and the idea of white supremacy on non-white people and the natural environment of these people.

Australia, as a British settler colony, experienced the destructive impacts of colonialism on its natural environment. Biological and environmental expansion of Europe in colonised lands, especially in the settler colonies, enabled the colonisers to control and manipulate the natural environment, ergo, its inhabitants. Due to the white superiority complex and anthropocentric discourses, the non-human world and the Aboriginal people, because of their close connection to nature, had been 'othered' and marginalised by the British settlers. Within the colonial mind-set, nature and everything that belong to it were considered as the opposite of culture and civilisation. In relation to these points, within the scope of postcolonial ecocriticism theory, this thesis aims to discuss the significant negative impact of the anthropocentric discourses of the British settlers on the natural environment of Australia and consequently on the Aboriginal people. Also, within the context of the period of Australia's colonisation and postcolonial ecocriticism discussions, this thesis aims to question white colonisers' ignorance of and indifference towards the non-human world and the way that the anthropocentric discourse 'othered' both nature and people who belong to it.

Australian literature provides powerful and worthy material on postcolonial ecocriticism due to the land's history as a British settler colony. This thesis will focus on two Australian novels in relation to postcolonial ecocriticism: Kate Grenville's *The Secret*

River (2005) and Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance* (2010). Through these two novels, it is possible to see both the colonial perspectives of white colonisers towards natural environments and also the impacts of these ideologies and actions on the Aboriginal people. The novels *The Secret River* and *That Deadman Dance* are both about the British settlement in Australia and its impact on the land and its inhabitants in the mid-nineteenth century. Although the ancestries of the authors of these two novels are different, the main concern and approach is similar. To put it more clearly, for Kate Grenville, it might be stated that, as an Australian writer of white ancestry, she reflects the same issues from the perspectives of the white settlers in *The Secret River;* and the novel clearly represents the Eurocentric discourse and the white settlers' efforts to justify the destruction of the balance of the land and its inhabitants and their will to own and rule the land that actually belongs to the Aboriginal people. As for Kim Scott, as an Australian writer of Aboriginal ancestry, he deals with the issue of imperialism and British settlers in Australia from the perspectives of the Aboriginal people and reflects the consequences of the anthropocentric ideologies of the whites on the land and its inhabitants in *That Deadman Dance.* Although the perspectives and the ancestries of the authors are different, the concerns of the novels are the same; both novels are concerned with the destructive impact of British imperialism. It is indicated in both of the novels that white settlers, due to their lack of knowledge about the land, through hunting, agriculture, cutting the trees, planting their own seeds, diseases, and for the sake of their own economic and political advantages, disturbed the balance of the natural environment in Australia, which eventually led to the marginalisation of nature and its inhabitants. In the light of these discussions, and to be able to better clarify the discussion undertaken in the thesis, in the following part of the "Introduction," brief information about Australian colonial history and postcolonial ecocriticism theory will be provided.

First of all, Australian colonial history and Australian-British relations throughout history will be provided. Australian indigenous history dates to 40,000 years back. However, through archaeological studies and new discoveries about the land, the date of Australia's occupation by indigenous people has been a controversial issue for a long time. As Veth and O'Connor point out, "[d]uring the 1950s it was commonly believed

that people occupied Australia no earlier than 10,000 years ago. The earliest occupation stretched to 20,000 years ago by 1965, 30,000 years ago by 1969, 40,000 by 1973" (17). This controversy about the earliest settlement date was due to the lack of written historical records of Australia and its inhabitants that gives information about the past 40,000 years. Although European sailors and British settlers wrote about the land and the Aboriginal people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, those records tell nearly nothing about the humans who lived in the land thousands of years ago (Hiscock 1). Hence, archaeological investigations and discoveries became the primary source of information in Australia's history before the European arrivals. Nonetheless, like so many other areas, science is a white dominated area, too. As Langford puts forward, "there can be no doubt that science of archaeology is white organised, white dominated, and draws its values and techniques from a European and Anglo-American culture and devotes much of its time to the study of non-white people" (2). Hiscock further explains the difference between European science and the Aboriginal reality as follows:

> When Europeans first visited the shores of Australia, they pondered the origin of Aborigines already in that land. Archaeologists have searched for evidence of how and when humans reached the continent, and their conclusions are a very different understanding of origins to the mythology and stories held by Aboriginal people. Lack of correspondence between indigenous oral traditions about the origins of humans and scientific investigations of human colonisation is hardly surprising. (20)

This lack of consistency in the European understandings of Aboriginal history is not surprising since the archaeological researches made by the Europeans were mostly used as a tool to benefit their colonial exploitation and imperialist discourses. Science, especially the discipline of archaeology, was developed to fulfil the colonial desire to conquer and control unknown lands and peoples by displaying them as exotic (Smith and Jackson 312). By creating a false perception of non-white people and stereotyping them with 'scientific facts,' European science 'othered' indigenous people by emphasising their own superiority over indigenous people's inferiority. In order to justify the colonial processes, one of the examples Langford gives about this bias in European science is a Tasmanian Aboriginal woman named Truganini[1]. Langford

[1] Truganini (1812?-76) was an Aboriginal woman who took part in her people's traditional culture after the Aboriginal life was disrupted by European invasions (Alexander n.p). She was labelled as Tasmania's

argues that "[t]he science of archaeology determined that Truganini was the last of our people. It did so by using scientific principles based upon European values. The effect of this 'scientific fact' has been incalculable to the 4000 Tasmanian Aboriginals who reside in Tasmania. Science had proven that we didn't exist" (2). By denying the existence of the Tasmanian Aboriginals, white people justified marginalising an entire race by using scientific discourse.

Regardless of the biased European science, it is now clearly known that Australia had thousands of years of indigenous history. However, European discourses still marginalise and deny indigenous cultures, histories, and traditions. For example, the history of Australia before the European arrivals is considered to be the 'prehistoric' time period of the continent whereas after that it is considered to be 'modern' Australian history which is a much shorter era. The first outsiders to arrive on the land were mostly seafarers and fishermen in the early 1600s and their voyages were unrecorded unlike the European maritime explorations undertaken by the Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries (Konishi and Nugent 43). Furthermore, Bashford and Macintyre assert that "[f]rom the early seventeenth century Portuguese and Spanish ships accidentally encountered, and sometimes actively explored, the west coast on journeys elsewhere, and the Dutch journeyed along the far south-east coast" (1). These centuries-long voyages to Australia were caused by Europe's search for more profitable resources, hunger for expansion into Southeast Asia and the Pacific Ocean, and also for mapping the world, especially the Australian coastline.

The interactions between the Europeans and the Aboriginal people were difficult because of the cultural differences and the language barrier. As Konishi and Nugent put forward, "[t]he newcomers did not realise that the Aboriginal men, and sometimes women and children, they encountered belonged to any of approximately 250 language groups comprising 500 clans that populated the continent" (45). Europeans were not aware of the fact that each tribe had a different culture, tradition, and language. This

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"last full blood Aboriginal" (qtd. in Hogan 98). After her death, her body was examined by 'scientists' and was displayed in the Tasmanian Museum until 1951 (Alexander n.p).

ignorance eventually triggered the notion that "the Aboriginal people possessed no religion and no laws, and were simply organised into family units" (Konishi and Nugent 45). This belief led them to belittle the Aboriginal culture and also to stereotype the Aboriginal people into one single category, which is 'uncivilised savages.' This discourse made the process of owning the land easier for the Europeans because it disconnected the indigenous people from the land.

After centuries of voyages by Europeans to find open resources and raw material for profit all around the world, the British arrived in Australia in the eighteenth century. James Cook, the English naval lieutenant, sailed to the east coast in 1770 with his well-built ship *Endeavour*, and claimed possession of the land in the name of his monarch, King George III (Macintyre 1). When Australia was first discovered by British sailors, the land was named *Terra Nullius* also known as "No Man's Land," which is a Latin phrase that means "a vacant territory" or "land belonging to no one" (Macintyre 33). Thus, the thousands of years of Aboriginal existence on the land was immediately ignored by the newly European arrivals. Later, Cook named the land "Sting Ray Harbour" due to the large number of fish that surrounded his ships; he later renamed it as "Botany Bay" to make a reference to the different and unique types of plants gathered by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solender, scientists on the expedition (Christopher and Maxwell-Stewart 68). Eighteen years after James Cook claimed the land, another British ship named *Supply* arrived in 1788, and this ship was the one that made Botany Bay "a British household name" (Christopher and Maxwell-Stewart 68). Right after *Supply*'s arrival in 1788, six other ships[2] arrived at Botany Bay in the course of two days and this "First Fleet" can be considered to foreshadow the land's future; these ships had officers, mariners and more than 736 convicts (Bateson 115). With the arrival of the First Fleet, the 'prehistoric' Australia ended, and the 'modern' history of Australia began. The passengers in the First Fleet settled at Sydney Cove and planted the first seeds of the social and economic foundations of Australia's future as a British settler colony.

[2] The six transport ships were the *Alexander*, *Friendship*, *Scarborough*, *Charlotte*, *Prince of Wales*, and *Lady Penrhyn* (Bateson 115).

Settler colonialism is one of the forms of European colonialism. It differs from colonialism of occupation which is another form of colonialism where "indigenous people remained in the majority but were administered by a foreign power" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Huggan, *Post-colonial Studies: Key Concepts* 193). India and Nigeria are examples of colonialism of occupation. In settler colonialism, however, European colonisers invaded the land and replaced the indigenous population with theirs. Australia, Argentina, Canada, and the United States are examples of settler colonialism. To be more specific, the term "settler colony" is explained by Curthoys and Mitchell as

> colonies in which an imperial power colonises a land, introduces its own population and frequently others as either free or unfree labour, and in the process dispossesses and largely displaces that land's Indigenous peoples. Usually, but not always, there is a massive demographic invasion, as the incoming peoples vastly outnumber the Indigenous peoples they seek to displace, while the Indigenous peoples thus colonised usually suffer high levels of population decline. (14)

Although the future of Britain's settlement in Australia was not clear, the British government's plan was to create an agricultural settler colony by transforming the convicts into farmers. Governor Phillips on 17 April 1787 instructed that "[m]en and women, reformed by hard, simple agricultural work, would eventually become small landowners" (qtd. in Karskens 91). This meant that British people who arrived at the land, whether willingly or as convicts were allowed and encouraged to stay and work on the land until it became British territory. As a consequence of this, between 1788 and 1850, Australian population changed drastically; Aboriginal population dropped while the colonial population grew at extremely high rates (McCalman and Kippen 295). Since the land was assumed as uninhabited by indigenous people in the beginning, settlers who ignored the existence of the Aboriginal people not only gradually replaced the Aboriginal population with the British one but also changed the ecological balance of Australia by bringing their own products, flora and fauna with them. As Butlin states, "Aboriginal population suggest[s] that their numbers may have fallen from 1 million to less than half that figure in the course of some 62 years. In the meantime, the introduced colonial population rose from a round figure of 1000 to 400000" (8). This fact clearly shows that in the course of half a decade, British people took over the land population-wise. The biggest downside of this British growth was the fact that the land they

claimed had already been occupied by the Aboriginal people. For a long time, Aboriginal people avoided the new settlements; however, as the British expanded their territories to the more fertile soils, the interactions were inevitable, because those more fertile soils had been occupied by Aboriginal people (Karskens 106). To tell it more clearly, what started as a prison to which British inmates were sent eventually became a new society when the inmates started settling, hence invading the Aboriginal living space.

The adaptation process of the new settlers was difficult. The new settlers mostly depended on the knowledge of Aboriginal people for survival, because the land, the living conditions, the environment, and the weather were all foreign to them. This strange and harsh landscape caused fear and alienation in the settlers, which made them nostalgic about their homeland. Therefore, they found the solution for this nostalgia by importing technologies, animals, and seeds from England, in order to make Australia more like England (Gaynor 274). This forced transformation of the land created a hybrid landscape: “a foreign place made English, and England turned exotic” (Holmes and Martin 231). This transformation of the Australian continent was not organic, but forced. The more European people settled, the more expeditions were made, and the more technologies, products, and ideas were originated. Macintyre and Scalmer state that “[b]etween 1861-1891 the number of farmers doubled,” which means that the number of people who purchased a piece of land, cleared it in order to create a dwelling, bought livestock and planted crops, and created a living also doubled in number (192). As the number of white people increased and the land they claimed expanded, the living conditions of Aboriginal people became much harder. One of the reasons for this was the fact that Aboriginal people were used as a labour force; Curthoys and Mitchell describe this labour as a “forced labour” and explain that Aboriginal workers were forced to sign a contract that made them a property of the whites and made them unable to leave or quit with their free will and those who disobeyed were punished severely (372). Many of the Aboriginals were beaten, forced to live in poverty, and were exposed to sexual harassment. The ways that Aboriginal people showed resistance was mostly through stealing and sometimes through violent attacks. Governor Robinson reported that “[w]here Aboriginal people had conducted violent attacks on settlers themselves,

these were nearly always reprisals for white men's taking or abusing Aboriginal women" (qtd. in Curthoys and Mitchell 373). However, the reactions and actions of the Aboriginal people had never been accepted as right or reasonable by the British. On the contrary, they tried their best to justify the violence they applied to the indigenous people.

Apart from the new technologies, products and ideas for their benefits, Europeans when they settled, also brought new diseases that affected the Aboriginal people and caused their population to decrease extremely. Smallpox travelled the land three times, first in 1789, then in the 1820s and again in the 1860s, and each time it 'cleared' the way for the colonists to expand and take control of the land. According to Butlin, "[i]n New South Wales, expansion into the interior occurred when the Aborigines were widely stricken by smallpox (1828) resulting in large-scale depopulation and destruction of the social order. Though they resisted colonial expansion, they were not in a position to offer strong opposition" (208). European diseases became another tool for white people to pursue their colonial desires. In addition to smallpox, many other European-based diseases affected the Aborigines. McCalman and Kippen explain this issue as follows:

> Other biological agents that came directly with the Europeans were 'slow-burning' infections that enabled carriers to be asymptomatic or at worst chronically ill, but still upright and breathing. Tuberculosis, sexually transmitted infections and typhoid (first known as 'colonial fever') began to kill Aboriginal people of all ages, or to prevent women from reproducing. Tuberculosis remained a disproportionate killer of Aboriginal Australians until the last quarter of the twentieth century. 4 Sexually transmitted infections added to the misery of women who were captured or enticed by frontier men from land or sea. (295)

Smallpox epidemics in 1789, 1828-31, and 1866 caused 30% or more Aboriginal population loss; between 1859-1900, tuberculosis killed at least 19.9% of the Aboriginal population; Measles epidemic in 1874-75 caused 20% of Aboriginal population loss; due to influenza, pneumonia, syphilis, and sexually transmitted diseases, Aboriginal populations suffered from excessive mortality rates; and infectious and respiratory diseases account for 53.4% of all recorded deaths in the final phase of the colonial

period[3] (Dowling 314-15). These diseases weakened the Aboriginal societies, killed millions of Aboriginal people and affected the new generations, and by doing so, made the process of claiming the land easier for the Europeans.

After centuries of colonisation and exploitation of the Australian land, Britain's claim over the land as British territory became official. More than a century after the First Fleet, at a convention which was held in 1897-98, The Commonwealth of Australia was established, and in 1901 it became official. Irving states that "[t]he Constitution turned the six self-governing Australian colonies[4] into States under a new federal government; its preamble describes this arrangement as an 'indissoluble Federal Commonwealth.' But the Constitution was also a statute, a British Act. This dual identity was to make classification difficult" (243). As a Commonwealth country, Australia had the power of constitutional amendment, which "conferred important national powers upon [Australia's] federal arms" (Irving 243). The Commonwealth of Nations, an international association, tied Australia to Britain because the British monarch was now also the Australian monarch. In a speech he gave in 1901, Australia's first Prime Minister Edmund Barton claimed that "[f]or the first time in history, we have a nation for a continent and a continent for a nation" (qtd. in Bashford and Macintyre 5). Australia was now officially claimed by the British; the continent was officially a part of the British nation.

After the establishment of Australia as a Commonwealth country, a flag was assigned to the country by the British. The flag of the Commonwealth of Australia has the Union Jack of Britain in the upper left corner, a large seven-pointed white star under the Union Jack representing Australian territories, stars of the Southern Cross (four seven-pointed and one four-pointed stars), and the blue ensign. The original design, which was displayed in 1901 had a slightly different design; later it was changed by King Edward VII in 1903. Until 1953, Australia had two flags, one with the blue ensign and the other

[3] For more detailed analyses and statistics of the diseases that European colonisers brought to the Australian land and infected Aboriginal people in the colonial period, see Dowling, Peter J. *'A Great Deal of Sickness' Introduced Diseases Among the Aboriginal People of colonial Southeast Australia 1788-1900*. January 1997. Australian National University. PhD Dissertation.

[4] New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania.

with the red ensign, blue ensign was used for official and naval purposes, while the red ensign was used by the merchant fleet. With the Flags Act 1953, the current flag with blue ensign became the official Australian National Flag ("Australian National Flag" n.p.). Flags are an important representation of a nation's culture, history, and identity. Therefore, it can be argued that by establishing the blue ensign Australian flag with the Union Jack, Britain guaranteed its claim on Australia.

The idea of 'white Australia,' which had been striving for more than a century, was achieved by the British. Although there was very little consultation of Aboriginal matters with the Aboriginals before 1901, the Commonwealth meant that the destiny of the Aboriginal race, culture, and heritage was officially in the hands of the British. Through housing, education, religion, culture, and even child removal, the Aboriginal assimilation increased highly in the twentieth century. The removal of 'half-caste' children began to be practised in the 1890s and continued in the twentieth century. 'Half-cast' means a person whose parents are of different races, in this case Aboriginal and white races. The act of removing children from their families was practised "on the basis that these children could be more easily trained in white ways than 'full-bloods' who, it was often felt, would die out" (Welch 208). These children were forced to assimilate into the white society through education in the English language and Christian religion and by breaking their connections with their families, Aboriginal cultures, and traditions. In 1937, with the resolution that was passed at the first Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities, assimilation of the 'half-caste' children was made a national policy, the government stated that "the destiny of the natives of Aboriginal origin, but not of full blood, lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth, and it therefore recommends that all efforts be directed to that end" under the title, "Destiny of the Race" (*Aboriginal Welfare* 3). The government, thus, purposed that the half-caste children will be absorbed into the white society. This absorption even included the "breeding out the colour" by removing half-caste girls and arranging their marriages with white men (Jacobs 458). Aboriginal people who were subjected to the policy of child removal and forced assimilation are known as 'The Stolen Generations.'

The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries mark the time period of increasing attention to the mistreatment of Aboriginal people. It was not until 1967 when the government amended the Constitution to make laws specifically for Aboriginal people that support and certain rights were provided for them. Also, a federal Office of Aboriginal Affairs was established in the same year. In addition, the Australian Aboriginal Flag was first displayed in 1971. The top half of the Aboriginal flag is black, which symbolises the indigenous people; the lower half is red, symbolising the earth and red ochre used in Aboriginal people's ceremonies; and the yellow circle in the middle represents the sun ("Australian Aboriginal Flag" n.p.). The flag is recognised as the flag of the Aboriginal people and is used to support and celebrate them and their culture. Furthermore, in 1994, *Going Home Conference* was held in Darwin, Australia, to share and discuss the experiences of the children who were removed, to support and to hear their stories. In 1997, *Bringing Them Home Report* was released, which is a "report of the national inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families" and "a tribute to the strength and struggles of many thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people affected by forcible removal" (Human Rights 1). Furthermore, on 13 February 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Ruff, apologised for the mistreatment and assimilation of Aboriginal children caused by the past government policies. In his speech he stated that

> [w]e reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations — this blemished chapter in our nation's history. We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians. We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country. For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry. (qtd in. "Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples" n.p.)

The national inquiry on *Bringing Them Home* was followed by a national apology. Of course, this apology was not a finalisation of hundreds of years of sufferings of Aboriginal people. On the contrary, it can be accepted as the beginning of laying the foundations of healing and a better future.

Furthermore, the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries saw great changes in the Australian society and administration, too. For instance, the British Monarch played a significant role in the Commonwealth Constitution and their political system. Butler asserts that "[i]n placing the Crown at the focal point of its constitutional arrangements, the Australian constitution-makers were acting entirely consistent with Australia's status as a British dominion: measure of responsible self-government exercisable under the British Crown with the potential for intervention in domestic affairs by the mother country" (7). However, British colonies' ties with the Empire were beginning to be weakened in the twentieth century. The issue of Monarchy as the formal form of government had become a political concern in the 1980s. By the end of the century, the discussion about Australia cutting its ties with the Crown and becoming a Republic became widespread. In 1999, a referendum was held on Australia and British Monarch's relation, with the question, "[t]o alter the Constitution to establish the Commonwealth of Australia as a republic with the Queen and Governor-General being replaced by a President appointed by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Commonwealth Parliament" (qtd. in Butler 13). The votes were in favour of disapproving of the Republic, with 54.87% No, and 45.13% Yes. The Australian Constitution, government, and law, therefore, remained dependent on the British Monarch.

To conclude, it can be stated that since the eighteenth century, Australia saw great changes in terms of social, cultural, political, and economic aspects. As the British domination on the land became more powerful, indigenous Aboriginal people's culture, language, and traditions gradually disappeared. They were not only weakened physically and spiritually, but their population was also disembarked. Although awareness of these issues are now raised through cultural and historical studies, Aboriginal people remain outnumbered and still neglected.

As the aim of the thesis is to analyse the two Australian novels in question mainly from the framework of postcolonial ecocriticism theory, in this part of the "Introduction," fundamental aspects of postcolonial ecocriticism theory will be introduced briefly. Different fragments of the theory will also be discussed in detail while examining the novels, respectively *The Secret River* and *That Deadman Dance*. In order to fully

comprehend postcolonial ecocriticism theory, postcolonial studies and ecocritical studies, both of which have been a prominent part of cultural studies, should be mentioned first.

First of all, it is important to emphasise the difference between imperialism and colonialism before discussing these terms because although they are often interchangeable, their meanings are different. Childs and Williams describe imperialism as "the extension and expansion of trade and commerce under the protection of political, legal, and military controls" (227). Imperialism is an ideological agent that controls a country's economic and military forces. Colonialism, on the other hand, is one of the forms of practices of imperialism. According to McLeod "[c]olonialism is one historically specific mechanism of imperialism which prioritises the act of settlement" (18). To further explain, Boehmer compares these two terms as follows:

> Imperialism can be taken to refer to the authority assumed by a state over another territory, as well as in military and economic power. It is a term associated in particular with the expansion of the European nation-state in the nineteenth century. Colonialism involves the consolidation of imperial power, and is manifested in the settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands, often by force. (*Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* 2)

Thus, colonialism is a form of imperialism and "a particular historical manifestation of imperialism, specific to certain places and times" (McLeod 18) because unlike imperialism, colonialism involves settlement in a new location.

Although Britain did not "stand alone in this enterprise" (Hobson 19), it was the first and the most powerful imperial power. France, Germany, Portugal, Belgium, Spain were also European imperial powers, and Russia and the United States were non-European imperial powers that involved in this competition for expansion (Hobson 19-22). By the twentieth century, Britain had colonised vast portions of the continents of Africa, North America, and Australia; as well as the countries such as Ireland, India, and "numerous islands in the Pacific and elsewhere" (Hobson 15). This vast amount of

land all over the world gave Britain the title of "the vast Empire upon which the sun never sets[5]" and made the Empire a world power. Robert Young states that "[t]his division between the rest and the west was made fairly absolute in the nineteenth century by the expansion of the European empires, as a result of which nine-tenths of the entire land surface of the globe was controlled by European, or European derived, powers" (*Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* 2). Britain, among the European empires, was the leading imperial and industrial power in the nineteenth century.

However, in the twentieth century, particularly with World War II, colonies gradually gained their independence from Britain during the 1950s. The Empire that ruled almost 25% of the world population collapsed after World War II and lost its power (McDowall 172). In 1960, the United Nations passed a resolution named "Declaration on the Granting of Independence of Colonial Countries and Peoples." This declaration was a milestone in the colonial period, as it started the decolonisation period. By declaring "[t]he subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation substitutes a denial of fundamental human rights" and that "[a]ll peoples have the right to self-determination: by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" (2), it defined foreign rule, which is colonialism, as a violation of human rights and promoted self-government and self-determination in the colonies.

This collapse of power and the independence of the colonies mark the beginning of postcolonialism. Postcolonialism is a study that deals with the long history of Europe's desire to conquer and rule other countries for economic exploitations and the discourses and the justifications that they used to separate the coloniser from the colonised during these processes. Colonialism rationalised the concept of ruling other nations and constructing a dominion over other people by claiming the 'superiority' of whites and imposing the idea on colonised people that they belong to an 'inferior' order, therefore, as McLeod asserts "colonialism establishes ways of thinking" and he argues that what

[5] This famous phrase was first used by George Macartney, a statesman and a diplomat, in 1773. He wrote this about the British Empire after Britain defeated France and her allies and increased the number of overseas territories after the Seven Years War (Hopkins 83).

colonisers were doing was in fact “colonising the mind” (24). Postcolonialism is a reaction and a resistance to those assumptions and discourses. Postcolonialism deals with all of the issues that are related to colonialism; it includes historical, cultural, literary, economic, social, and political analyses within the context of the impact of European imperialism. It is written from the perspectives of those who were colonised first-hand and those who still experience the legacy of colonialism even after the decolonisation period. Postcolonialism reflects the effects of cultural crisis and displacement on the peoples of former colonies as a result of the imperial discourses and impositions.

The discourses and the justifications the colonisers used constructed cultural binary oppositions to ‘prove’ the ‘differences’ between white and non-white. These binary oppositions were used to separate the West from ‘the rest.’ Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin point out that “[a] simple distinction between centre/margin; coloniser/colonised; metropolis/empire; civilised/primitive represents very efficiently the violent hierarchy on which imperialism is based and which it actively perpetuates” (*Post-colonial Studies: Key Concepts* 19). Therefore, by describing and stereotyping colonised people in negative terms, Western cultures established their superiority and domination. Within the colonial sphere, the most destructive binary system includes race. This binary system simplified cultural or physical complexities by reducing the differences to ‘black/brown/yellow/white,’ which eventually constructed the ‘white/non-white’ opposition. The binary opposition of ‘white/non-white’ also brought along other oppositions such as, ‘civilised/primitive,’ ‘modern/savage,’ ‘superior/inferior,’ and ‘rational/ignorant.’ McLeod asserts that “Empire did not rule by military and physical force alone. It endured by getting *both colonising and colonised people* to see their world and themselves in a particular way, internalising the language of Empire as representing the natural, true order of life” (24). These constructed oppositions were imposed on the colonised people as the truth and they were expected to internalise these differences and the values that claimed their inferiority.

Moreover, many theorists, by analysing the colonial discourses and theorising about these to shape and influence postcolonial studies, helped the ‘decolonising the mind’

process, which is the process of removing the influence of the colonial culture by changing the colonised people's opinions about themselves and their identities. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) especially influenced postcolonial studies and paved the way for other aspects to be analysed and discussed. Apart from Said, Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1957), Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994), and Gayatri Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999) contributed to the development of postcolonial theory. These theorists and their works questioned the colonial mind-sets that represented non-white or non-European people and their culture as 'the Other' and criticised ethnic and racial discriminations, unjust implementations, superiority complex of the whites, and the binary oppositions that separated the colonisers from the colonised. By doing so, they "formed the academic field of postcolonial studies in the mid-1970s and 1980s" (Mukherjee 48).

Furthermore, many prominent postcolonial authors contributed to postcolonial studies. Postcolonial literature has been "produced by individuals, communities, and nations with distinct histories of colonialism" (Mullaney 3). Thus, people whose lives were shaped by the powers of colonialism expressed their concerns through literature to create awareness by showing colonialism's impact upon once colonised countries from their own perspectives. Said states that

> [m]any of the most interesting post-colonial writers bear their past within them as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as potentially revised visions of the past tending toward a new future, as urgently reinterpretable and re-deployable experiences, in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory taken back from the empire. (*Culture and Imperialism* 30-31)

Postcolonial writers gradually rejected the 'inferior' and 'uncivilised' portrayal of the non-white people and cultures and revolted against the discourse that claimed Western superiority over 'the rest.' Postcolonial literature is a re-writing of colonial history and a criticism towards European colonial practices, discrimination, and physical and psychological exploitation of colonised people. However, Boehmer argues that postcolonial literature is more than issue-driven texts or "an instrument of social

change, or even as a representation of certain geopolitical conditions"; it is also a mode of literature "which we understand the world and ourselves in it" (*Postcolonial Poetics* 2). By exploring various aspects of colonialism, they wrote about their own experiences and sufferings and aimed to reassert their own identity, culture, history, language, and literature. They introduced their cultures and traditions and made their voices heard. Authors from various countries wrote in various different literary forms such as novel[6], drama[7], and poetry[8].

Ecocriticism or environmental criticism, on the other hand, is a study that emphasises the non-human world. Glotfelty defines ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" and explains it in a more detailed way by stating that "[j]ust as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies" ("Introduction" xviii). Ecocritics, hence, tie their cultural analyses explicitly to a 'green' moral and political agenda. In this respect, ecocriticism is closely related to environmentally oriented developments in philosophy and political theory" (Garrard 3). Although the concept of nature has been a significant subject matter for literature for centuries, it was not until 1873 that the word 'ecology' was coined in the English language, and a century later the study of ecocriticism began as a result of the highly increased impact of the human race on the natural environment (White 5). Therefore, after a long period of being concerned with issues such as race, class, and gender, environmental issues became a part of a study field of cultural and literary studies in the twentieth century. Ecocritical scholars study the texts that deal with environmental issues and try to draw attention to the ways humans treat non-human world in order to raise consciousness on this subject. They are interested in the

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[6] In the novel genre, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* in 1958 (Nigeria); Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* in 1966 (Dominica); V.S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* in 1967 (Trinidad); Salman Rushdie's *Shame* in 1983 (India); David Malouf's *Remembering Babylon* in 1993 (Australia) are amongst the prominent postcolonial works.

[7] In the drama genre, Wole Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forests* in 1960 (Nigeria); Derek Walcott's *Pantomime* in 1978 (Caribbean); Zindika's *Lenora's Dance* in 1992 (Jamaican) stand out.

[8] Poets such as Linton Kwesi Johnson (Jamaican), Jackie Kay (Scottish/Nigerian), and John Agard (British Guiana) are important representatives of postcolonial poetry.

definition and representation of nature. As Coupe argues, “[n]ature is perhaps the most complex word in the language” (3). Therefore, the aim of ecocritical scholars “is to keep one eye on the ways in which ‘nature’ is always in some ways culturally constructed, and the other on the fact that nature really exists, both the object and albeit distantly, the origin of our discourse” (Garrard 10). Rather than regarding nature only as an aesthetic theme in literature, ecocriticism analyses the relationship between humans, nature, and culture.

Between 1970 and 1990, the First Wave of ecocriticism analysed literary texts with a “nature endorsing approach” (Soper 67) in order to appreciate nature as a privileged being. It had a tendency to separate nature and human beings from each other, so that “the realms of the ‘natural’ and the ‘human’ looked more disjunct” (Buell 21), and the value of nature would be promoted. By separating culture from nature, the aim was to help and protect natural environments from the destructive aspects of human culture. By the twenty-first century, between 1990 and 2000, ecocriticism expanded to the Second Wave and rejected the First Wave’s separative attitude and focused on the ways in which nature and human culture is connected. As Howarth states, “although we cast nature and culture as opposites; in fact they constantly mingle, like water and soil in a flowing stream” (69). The Second Wave of Ecocriticism, therefore, focused on the environmental concerns which resulted from social, political, economic, scientific, or ideological constructions of humans in the age of anthropocentrism. They argued humans and nature are not only interdependent of each other, but also they have a mutual relationship and affect each other through interactions.

Although scholars had been working on criticism about ecological issues, they were not organised to be identified as a group. As Glotfelty states, “each was a voice howling in the wilderness,” and therefore these individual studies resulted in categorisation of their works under various different names such as “American Studies, regionalism, pastoralism, the frontier, human ecology, science and literature, landscape in literature, or the names of the authors treated” (“Introduction” xvii). Although these individuals were disorganised and were unable to gather under one roof, Glotfelty further argues that “[r]egardless of what name it goes by, most ecocritical work shares a common

motivation: the troubling awareness that have reached the age of environment limits, a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planet's basic life support" ("Introduction" xx). It transforms and criticises the conventional anthropocentric discourses, allows us to give more attention to the world we live in, and raises awareness upon the subject of the relationship between nature and human culture.

Moreover, in 1992, a group of scholars and writers, who were interested in the subjects of ecological crisis and environmentalism, founded the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE), an international organisation which helped the study of literature and ecology grow under a single roof ("Vision and History" n.p). As Garrard points out,

> [m]any early works of ecocriticism were characterised by an exclusive interest in Romantic poetry, wilderness narrative and nature writing, but in the last few years ASLE has turned towards a more general cultural ecocriticism, with studies of popular scientific writing, film, TV, art, architecture and other cultural artefacts such as theme parks, zoos and shopping malls. (4)

Furthermore, ecocritical theory has expanded into many other subjects and approaches since its beginning, such as "nature writing, deep ecology, the ecology of cities, ecofeminism, the literature of toxicity, environmental justice, bioregionalism, the lives of animals, the revaluation of place, interdisciplinarity, eco-theory, the expansion of the canon to include previously unheard voices, and the reinterpretation of canonical works from the past" (Love 5). Therefore, ecocriticism is a multidisciplinary study which continues to grow and develop.

As for postcolonial ecocriticism, it combines and balances these two ostensibly different subject matters, that is to say, postcolonialism and ecocriticism, and tries to "bring postcolonial and ecological issues together as a means of challenging continuing imperialist modes of social and environmental dominance" (Huggan and Tiffin 2). Widespread research about the tragic conditions of the colonised lands, later, gave way

to the emergence of discussion of postcolonial ecocriticism which aims to discuss and criticise the impacts of imperialism on the natural environment and its inhabitants, and argues that colonial discourses affected the non-human world significantly. In other words, "[w]hat postcolonial/ecocritical alliance brings out, above all, is the need for a broadly materialist understanding of the changing relationship between people, animals and environment" (Huggan and Tiffin 12). The devastating impacts which are actually the grave repercussions of the anthropocentric discourses of the Western societies destroyed the nature of the colonised lands and marginalised indigenous people who belonged to those lands. Postcolonial ecocriticism argues that the general discourse towards the world has always been anthropocentric, which makes the non-human world marginalised. Therefore, the non-human world's importance to humans is overlooked and postcolonial ecocriticism aims to draw attention to this subject matter.

Settler colonies' natural environments had been more affected by colonialism and the colonial mind-set, and one of the examples for this is Australia. As it has already been mentioned before, Australia was considered uninhabited when it was first discovered by British sailors. Hence, the Aboriginal existence in the land was instantly ignored. As Huggan and Tiffin state, "[s]uch places [settler colonies], after all, were apparently untamed, unowned and, above all, unused; and, accordingly, settlers set about rendering them productive and profitable through imported methods rather than by accommodating them to local circumstances" (8). Colonisers' actions which decreased the Aboriginal population were rationalised because of the their belief that the land had not been inhabited; and it also resulted in an immense change in ecological balance in Australia due to colonisers' decisions to bring their own products, flora and fauna in order to construct a sustainable settlement. This forced change in the environment destroyed the ways of living of the Aboriginal people in an irrevocable way because instead of adapting themselves to the Australian environment, colonisers transformed the ecosystem for their own benefits.

Additionally, anthropocentrism, which is the absolute prioritisation of humans over the non-human world, was deeply rooted into the colonial mind-set. According to Huggan and Tiffin, "anthropocentrism and western imperialism are intrinsically interwoven"

(11). Correspondingly, by prioritising humans over nature, the exploitation of colonised lands' nature was normalised. Furthermore, this ideology was applied not only to the natural environment but also to its inhabitants. According to Plumwood,

> the ideology of colonisation involves a form of *anthropocentrism* that underlies and justifies the colonisation of non-human nature through the imposition of the colonisers' land forms and visions of ideal landscapes in just the same way that *Eurocentrism* underlies and justifies modern forms of European colonisation, which see indigenous cultures as 'primitive,' less rational and closer to children, animals and nature. ("Decolonizing" 53)

Within the colonial mind-set, nature and culture are separated, and humans are considered as the masters of nature, which is regarded "as a mere commodity" (Opperman 185). Moreover, Plumwood states that, anthropocentrism "tends to see the human sphere as beyond or outside the sphere of 'nature,' construes ethics as confined to the human (allowing the non-human sphere to be treated instrumentally,) treats non-human *difference* as inferiority" ("Decolonizing" 53). Accordingly, Aboriginal culture is closely intertwined with nature. In fact, Aboriginal people are born into this nature/culture relationship. As a result of Aboriginal people's close connection to nature, within the anthropocentric mind-set, they were likened to nature and were marginalised and 'othered' by British settlers. Aboriginal people were treated "as a part of nature, and thus instrumentally as animals" (Huggan and Tiffin 6), and were considered as creatures who lacked reason and rationality. As a consequence of the anthropocentric manifestation, "[n]atural environments were subjected to a relentless expropriation in an ongoing plunder and massive pillage just as mercilessly as the colonised people themselves" (Opperman 181). Therefore, it allowed the colonisers to rationalise imposing their land forms and managements to colonised lands and 'other' the indigenous people who belong to those lands.

Driven by economic profit, European colonisers "robb[ed] the periphery of [colonised lands'] natural wealth and exploit[ed] ecological resources (Foster and Clark 189). This type of exploitation is defined by Crosby as "ecological imperialism," and explained as "the success of European imperialism has a biological, and ecological, component" (7). When "[s]ettlers arrived with crops, flocks and herds, and cleared land, [and]

exterminate[ed] local ecosystems" (Huggan and Tiffin 7), they destroyed the balance not only of the ecosystem of the land but also of Aboriginal people's way of living. Through hunting, clearing the forests, agriculture, cutting trees, planting crops, infectious diseases, and introducing new flora and fauna, colonisers expanded biologically and ecologically. To be more clear, as Opperman argues, "when the British entered into the colonised territories so did their Old World explosive plant and animal species, Old World disease organism, infectious germs, and explosive microbes, which led to the extinction of many native plants and animals" (182). Nature, therefore, was regarded as an open resource to benefit the 'progress' of the Europeans and also it was considered that nature's existence was only to serve humans, which is the superior one of the two, to profit.

Separation of nature from culture allowed the exploitation of colonised lands' natural environments without considering the consequences. Indigenous people like the Aborigines were highly affected by the colonial mind-set of anthropocentric discourses that imposed the inferiority of nature and its inhabitants. This way of thinking eased the biological and ecological expansion of Europe and displacement of Aboriginal people from their own natural surroundings. Therefore, postcolonial ecocriticism argues that anthropocentrism and European imperialism are closely intertwined with each other. It also aims to emphasise the destructive impacts of imperialism on the natural environment and on the indigenous people who cannot be separated from their environment.

While there has been much analysis of postcolonial literature in cultural studies, environmental issues embedded into postcolonial theory have been neglected. However, there are still researches made about this issue all around the world, including Turkey. For example, in 2017 Yeşim İpekçi from Fırat University, examined Indra Sinha's *Animals People* (2007), which is an Indian postcolonial novel, from the perspective of postcolonial ecocriticism and highlighted the ecological consequences of British imperialism on India. Also, Derya Dinç from Erciyes University, analysed other Indian postcolonial novels, namely Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* (2008), Anuradha Roy's *An Atlas of Impossible Longing* (2008) and Gita Metha's *A River Sutra* (1993) in her

PhD Dissertation in 2018, within the framework of postcolonial ecocritical theory. Different from these two studies whose major concern in India, this thesis aims to analyse Australia's colonial history and its consequences on the natural environment of the land and its inhabitants by emphasising the close connection of Aboriginal people's nature/culture relationship. Both of the novels in this thesis are selected with the purpose of exploring the nineteenth century British settler colonialism and the relationship between the white settlers and the indigenous Aboriginal people in the continent.

Within the light of these discussions, the thesis will consist of two separate chapters, each of which will be dedicated to the discussion of postcolonial ecocriticism in line with two Australian novels. In this thesis, especially the novels that are not in the canon have been studied. The first chapter will focus on Kate Grenville's *The Secret River*, and the second one will be concerned with Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance.*

CHAPTER I:
"LABOUR *AGAINST* WILDERNESS":
KATE GRENVILLE'S *THE SECRET RIVER*

"We are nature and the past, all the old ways,
Gone now and scattered" (Oodgeroo Noonuccal, "We Are Going" 29-30)

The violence against the Aboriginal people and to the Australian environment was closely connected with British imperialism in the nineteenth century resulting in colonial settlement. Kate Grenville in *The Secret River* (2005) engages with this issue from the perspectives of the perpetrators of the violence, who were the early white settlers. Therefore, this chapter aims to analyse the novel in detail and discuss the early nineteenth century white settlers in Australia and their anthropocentric discourses which 'othered' the indigenous people and the natural environment in this continent on the basis of postcolonial ecocritical theory.

Born in 1950 in Sydney, Australia, Kate Grenville has published 16 books[9] which concern the issues of class, gender, and race in colonial and contemporary Australia. As a white Australian, her ancestry dates back to the first British settlers in Australia when James Cook claimed the possession of the land in the name of the British Monarchy in 1788 which started the "The Modern Australia" or "the White Australia" (Macintyre 1). As a white Australian, Grenville's ancestry dates back to the First Fleet in the eighteenth century, to the British convicts who changed the whole way of living on Australia's land and natives. In her novel *Searching for the Secret River* (2006), which is a novel that describes her research and writing process of *The Secret River* (2005), she not only conducts research about the settler history of Australia, but also explores her own family's history. In fact, her great-great-great grandfather, Solomon Wiseman, was one of the convicts sent to Australia. Wiseman, after becoming a freeman "took up

[9] *Bearded Ladies* (1984), *Lilian's Story* (1985), *Dreamhouse* (1986), *Joan Makes History* (1988), *The Writing Book* (1990), *Making Stories* (1993), *Dark Places* (1994), *The Idea of Perfection* (1999), *Writing from Start to Finish* (2001), *The Secret River* (2005), *Searching for the Secret River* (2006), *The Lieutenant* (2008), *Sarah Thornhill* (2011), *One Life* (2015), *The Case Against Fragrance* (2017), *A Room Made of Leaves* (2020).

land" in Australia and became a landowner (*Searching* 12). Grenville explains the reason why she did research and wrote about the subject as follows: "I wanted to find out more about him because – like many Australians whose forebears were early settlers – I knew that my present life was built on the back of some dark history. I needed to find out just how Wiseman had 'taken up' that land" ("The Problem with Historical Fiction" n.p.). Thus, the main issue of the text is the settler-colonial history of Australia, and the process of 'taking up' land. While talking about her research, Grenville also points out the problem with the phrase 'taking up' land in her conversations with Melissa Lucashenko, an indigenous Australian writer. When Grenville states that her great-great-great grandfather Solomon Wiseman became a freeman and "took up" land in Hawkesbury, Lucashenko answers by saying "What do you mean "took up?' He took" (*Searching* 52). This distinction of the phrases which is clarified by Lucashenko became a turning point in the construction of Grenville's views about her family's stories in the past. Grenville then describes these two terms as such:

> *Took up:* You took up something that was lying around. You took up something that was on offer. You took up hobbies and sports.
> *Took:* Had many more possibilities. You took something because it was there like a coin on the ground. You took offence or flight or a bath. Or you took something away from someone else. (*Searching* 52)

Therefore, the phrase her ancestors used while talking about their history, is in fact a euphemism for taking something that was not theirs by force. However, Grenville also points out her failure to find the most significant information about her ancestry, which is the way Wiseman dealt with the indigenous population of his time. Despite many documents she found about Wiseman's businesses, she asserts that there was a blank space when it came to the Aboriginal issues (*Searching* 172). This void regarding this issue or in her words, "the silent part of the history" ("The Problem with Historical Fiction" n.p.) was the reason for her to write, and a way to turn history into fiction.

The Secret River, therefore, is a historical fiction based on Grenville's British ancestors who colonised Australia. The novel is from the perspectives of the British settlers, mainly from the perspective of the protagonist William Thornhill, who is based on Grenville's great-great-great grandfather Salomon Wiseman. Grenville dives deeper

into the silenced past of Australia, the ‘secret’ of settler colonial violence against not only the Aboriginal people but also the natural environment. Grenville also points out in various interviews that she was influenced by Stanner Boyer’s lectures in 1968 where he states “there is a secret river of blood in Australian history” that has been repressed by what he calls “the Great Australian Silence” (qtd in Kossew 8). Grenville, hence, borrows this quotation for the title of her novel where she explores the secret. As McGonegal puts it, “a secret concerning the unspeakable horrors committed against Aboriginal people that is protected by the settler-protagonist, and both insist on not only the impossibility but also the necessity of (re)presenting that secret” (73). Indeed, the novel not only presents the bloodshed and the violence in Australia’s colonial history, but it also, as Grenville points out in an interview, provides “a reassessment of what it is to be a white Australian” (Wyndham n.p). That is why, the dedication of *The Secret River* is as such: “This novel is dedicated to the Aboriginal people of Australia: past, present, and future” (n.p). Thereby, as Herrero points out, “Grenville’s novel could be said to endeavour to spell out the trauma and anxieties of (un)belonging that haunt settler culture, with the aim of promoting Aboriginal, and by extension national healing, and paving the way for the so-called Australian Reconciliation process” (89). In other words, it might be said that Grenville offers an apology for her white ancestry’s actions in the past and she tries to give voice to the silenced history of Aboriginal Australia.

The narrative of the novel begins with William Thornhill, a young man growing up in poverty in England, and ends up stealing for survival. In 1806, he and his wife Sal are transported to Australia because of Thornhill’s crime. Thornhill works on the land as a convict for a year to gain his freedom, however, after becoming a freeman he decides to buy a hundred acres of land and becomes a landowner. Thornhill tries to set up a ‘civilised’ life in this foreign land which was already inhabited by the Aboriginal people. The settlers’ greed of owning land slowly grows and their ignorance about the environment turns into hatred towards the Aboriginal people. These malignant feelings eventually lead to the destruction of the ecosystem of Australia, and to a massacre of the Aboriginal people by the white settlers.

European colonialism had devastating impacts upon colonised lands and cultures, however, the relationship between colonialism and its impacts upon natural environments has been neglected. Nineteenth century British colonialism was indeed political, economic, and social. In fact, this ideology gained its power from the so-called superiority of the white race over the so-called 'Other.' By colonial acts of exploitation, Western societies became richer and more powerful. As well as the political, economic, and social rules, the natural environments of the indigenous people, in this process, were also highly affected and were transformed; Western ideologies about the environment were introduced as the 'truth' and were forced on the colonised lands. As Opperman argues, Britain was the primary imperial power that had an immense effect on ecology; since nature was considered as an economic priority, "they disregarded the environmental consequences of their actions unless of course their economic interests were at risk" (180-81). The exploitation of nature in colonised lands was the products of European anthropocentric values, rooted deep in the colonial mind-set that claimed nature as a construction which was "nothing more than a resource for human use and wildness as a challenge for the rational mind to conquer" (Adams and Mulligan 5). The colonial-mind characterises nature "as passive, as non-agent and non-subject," similar to the idea of *terra nullius*, which is defined as "a resource empty of its own purposes or meaning, and hence available to be annexed for the purpose of those supposedly identified with reason or intellect" (Plumwood, *Feminism* 4). As a consequence of this mind-set, the destruction of the environment and ecosystem of the colonised lands was rationalised by the colonisers because as the 'superior' beings, they claimed they had the right to alter the natural ways of living under the guise of 'bringing civilisation.'

The 'othering' of the land by white colonisers is quite apparent in *The Secret River*. Plumwood argues that "the human 'coloniser' treats nature as radically Other, and humans as emphatically separated from nature and animals. From an anthropocentric standpoint nature is a hyper-separate lower order, lacking any real continuity with the human" ("Decolonizing" 54). Hyper-separation between human and nature, which means "defining the dominant identity emphatically against, or in opposition to, the subordinate identity, by exclusion of their real or supposed qualities" (Plumwood, "Decolonizing" 54), is primarily accomplished by the settlers' first impressions. In *The*

Secret River, Australian land is described by the settlers as “a place out of a dream, a fierce landscape of chasms and glowering cliffs and a vast unpredictable sky. Everywhere was the same but everywhere was different. Thornhill felt his eyes wide open, straining to find something he could understand. It seemed the emptiest place in the world, too wild for any man to have made it his home” (101). The impressions and the descriptions of the land by the settlers support the ideology that regard nature as “untamed, unowned and, above all, unused” (Huggan and Tiffin 8). In fact, “[t]he stories of the white man” (Said 22) about the colonised lands not only strengthen the British imperialist discourses, but also take its strength from it. Opperman illustrates that these ideas “not only celebrated the economic and cultural hegemony, and the political authority of the British colonisers, but also they were the most effective cultural documents in reproducing, and reinforcing the dominant Eurocentric values, especially through their subversive landscape descriptions” (187). For example, Thornhill’s first impressions are fear and disgust about the unknown land of Australia. As Adams asserts, “[w]hite men feared nature in the form of disease and the dark forest and did their best to overcome it” (“Nature” 43). The foreignness of the land creates an instant threat for Thornhill, and he claims “[t]his was a place, like death, from which men did not return” (4). The perception of the early European arrivals to New South Wales was in fact negative. As Gaynor states, “the newcomers despised the strange and harsh landscape in which they found themselves. In fact, responses varied, and delight and wonder were expressed alongside fear and alienation” (272). Even though they are not there on their own will but because of Thornhill’s conviction, the colonial mind-set and the anthropocentric discourse are still embodied by the Thornhill family, especially Thornhill himself. For him England is the ‘civilised’ place whereas this alien land is nothing more than a “half-formed temporary sort of place” (75).

Within the colonial mind, nature is “defined in terms of the absence of human impact, specifically European human impact” (Adams, “Nature” 33). The Australian land and its natural environment are the complete opposite of what the white settlers think is the normal, which is England. The weather, the animals, the trees, and the landscape overall are confusing and foreign to them. For Thornhill’s wife Sal, for example, these differences are to the point of insult to her homeland. As it is stated in the novel, “[s]he

was inclined to take it personally about the trees, wondering aloud that they did not know enough to be green, the way a tree should be" (88). Furthermore, the colonial mind-set towards natural environments and landscapes was characterised by the belief of nature's possibility to be reconstructed "to serve human needs and desires" (Adams, "Nature" 23). Through the fear of the unknown, the colonial mind-set of 'bringing civilisation' to the foreign lands was justified by the desire to 'tame' the wild in order to transform the environment to fit their desires. Thus, the 'taming' process becomes an alteration of the balance of the natural environment. Instead of adapting to the Australian ecosystem, the settlers transformed the ecosystem for their own benefit. Langton points out that "British settlers perceived their new environments as harsh and inhospitable and they actively supplanted these 'wild,' uncultivated lands with familiar European land-use and management systems, which they believed they could control, regardless of whether or not these imported management regimes were suitable to local conditions" (83). When Sal's wish to return to her homeland is destroyed, she finds the solution for her longing by making Australia more like England through constructing a garden: "Rather than taking them Home, she had made Home here" by planting English flowers such as daffodils and roses, and "*real* trees with proper leaves," and by importing Irish turf (317-18). Colonised lands were regarded as "underdeveloped, unmanaged and underexploited" (Adams, "Nature" 23) and therefore, the lack of European influence upon the environment reinforced its inferiority in the colonisers' minds. This misperception enabled the white settlers to remake, manipulate, and control the land. Within this context, "[g]ardens were an important symbol of transformation, marking possession as well as providing food and evoking memories of home" (Gaynor 274). Martin Mulligan comments on this subject as follows: "It strikes me even more strongly that highly structured gardens represent an attempt to control nature by making it into an ornament or trophy, and we have inherited that attitude in Australia" (qtd. in Adams and Mulligan 2). Therefore, Sal's English garden is a way to cultivate the 'uncivilised' wilderness which she considers as a commodity that can be altered in Western ways. However, despite Sal's best efforts, the garden is doomed to fail because it "is not a symbol of growth but rather of cultural dislocation" (Kossew 13); because rather than adapting to the environment, settlers like Sal strived to construct a "second Britain" (Flannery 355) by transforming the Australian nature into a hybrid one, neither

purely Australian nor English but something in between, which eventually became a cultural and a natural disruption.

Furthermore, anthropocentric mind-set that claims the superiority of humans over nature was not only applied to the colonised lands but to its inhabitants, too. Mies suggests that, "[t]he white colonisers were convinced that tribal people were creatures in a lower evolutionary state than themselves and that the universal law of history demanded their surrender to 'progress'" (148). Within the context of Australia and Aboriginal people, this prejudge was related to the indigenous relationship with nature. Therefore, as a consequence of the marginalisation of the Australian environment, Aboriginal people were also marginalised and dehumanised. Curtain defines this as "environmental racism" and explains it as "the connection, in theory and practice, of race and the environment so that the oppression of one is connected to, and supported by, the oppression of the other" (145). This dehumanisation of Aboriginal people is due to the fact that, as Huggan and Tiffin argue, "[i]n pre-invasion Australia, the nature of the environment had dictated nomadism as the only way of life for both people and animals" (9). For Aboriginal people, therefore, nature cannot be separated from culture. However, within the colonial mind-set, the exploitation of colonised lands' environments is 'naturalised' by claiming humans as masters of nature. Exploitation of nature by the colonisers, therefore, is connected to the exploitation of its inhabitants. By connecting a certain race with the environment, the 'othering' and domination of both are accomplished. Similarly, *The Secret River* frequently emphasises the closeness of the Aboriginal people and the environment. They are considered as a part of nature, as one with their natural surroundings. As a matter of fact, Grenville explains the way she wrote about the Aboriginal people with such a nature/culture relationship in the following words:

> I began to realise that the Aboriginal people were emerging in a way I hadn't planned: through the descriptions of the landscape. The rocks, the trees, the river – I realised that I was often describing them in human terms – the golden flesh of the rocks beneath their dark skin, the trees gesturing, the bush watchful and alive. Humanising the landscape could be a way of showing the link between indigenous people and their land because, in some

> way that I recognised without really understanding, the country *was* the people. (*Searching* 340-41)

However, as Aboriginal people are considered as a part of Australian nature, their being 'othered' by the white settlers becomes inevitable. This is due to the fact that "colonial ideas of nature repeatedly portrayed it as separated from human life, and not engaged with it" (Williams, "Nature" 42). Natural environments were regarded as a commodity that provided raw materials, and were considered as open resources to be plundered. Similarly, Aboriginal people were treated as a part of nature and as non-human agents who belonged to a lower sphere than the colonisers themselves. The natural environment is neither accepted nor respected by the settlers, and as a consequence, the indigenous people who belong to that natural environment and have a genuine, peaceful, and nomadic relationship with their natural surroundings are also 'othered.'

In *The Secret River*, to make 'othering,' the colonisers frequently liken them to animals, in other words, dehumanise them. European colonisation, as Plumwood argues, is tried to be justified by the Eurocentric mind-set of the colonisers that consider "indigenous cultures as 'primitive,' less rational and closer to children, animals and nature" ("Decolonizing" 53). Similarly, Curtain asserts that, "in a culture that damages nature, there is a tendency to reinforce this by connecting certain people with nature so they can be 'naturalised.' Conversely, in a culture that oppresses certain groups of people, there is a tendency to connect these groups with justifications for damage to nature" (145). Thus, the anthropocentric colonial mind-set not only separated nature from culture and denied the relationship of the natural environment and its inhabitants, but also related the inferiority of nature to the Aboriginal race and constructed a dominating discourse that justified the oppression of both. Huggan and Tiffin point out that "[n]ot only were other people often regarded as part of nature - and thus treated instrumentally as animals - but also they were forced or co-opted over time into western views of the environment, thereby rendering cultural and environmental restitution difficult if not impossible to achieve" (6). Correspondingly, in *The Secret River*, one of the natives named Scabby Bill is described as "the same as the ants or the flies, a hazard of the place that had to be dealt with" (91). Their cultural differences create a conflict, and construct the idea that the Aboriginal way of living is inferior compared to the white way of living. The

settlers consider them as childish inferior beings that are “no better than dumb animals” (*The Secret River* 200) or as wild creatures that behave only on instinct like “snakes and spiders, not something that could be guarded against” (*The Secret River* 93). The western anthropocentric discourse of the whites is apparent in this example as non-whites are likened to animals which are considered as inferior or hazardous creatures compared to the ‘superior’ white ‘civilised’ people.

Actually, these ideas about natural environment and its inhabitants’ inferiority were constructed as a result of scientific development and ecological discussions in the seventeenth century. Anthropocentrism was strengthened with these developments, which eventually allowed it to rationalise the negative impacts of the colonial mind-set upon environments, as long as it provided economic profits. For example, Rene Descartes, who is one of the leading spokespersons of the Scientific Revolution in the seventeenth century, improved the Christian anthropocentric idea and supported the belief that animals were inferior beings compared to humans. Descartes believed that nature was a machine and “the new science would make humans the masters and possessors of nature” which resulted in the idea that only humans had minds (or souls) and animals lacked certain mental facilities, and thus, they were only bodies (machines) that could not feel pain (Sessions 160-61). Correspondingly, colonisers drew an analogy between Aboriginal people and animals with the intention of reducing the latter to the level of automata that lacked the mental capabilities they claimed they had. While claiming the superiority of the ‘rational mind’ of humans over ‘non-rational’ nature, European Enlightenment paved the way for the imperialist mind-set to present itself as the one who “had a duty to enlighten the rest of the world” by “conquering wildness and bringing order and rationality to ‘uncivilised’ peoples and nature” (Adams and Mulligan 3).

The discourses that separated humans from nature created an atmosphere where colonisers’ lack of interest in colonised lands and their ignorance about Aboriginal nature/culture relationship are intensified. Aboriginal people’s way of living had not been understood, and therefore, not accepted. As Hunt and Lessard point out, “[p]rior to the arrival of the Europeans, Aboriginals had no sense of European-style private

property" (101). As a consequence, for a white man with a European mind-set, owning land means turning it into a private property by creating a border, marking and working the land, which is observed in Thornhill, in *The Secret River*, too. However, as it has already been mentioned before, the Aboriginals' nomadic way of living differs from the European mind-set. Grenville, in her other novel *Searching for the Secret River*, argues that her research about Aboriginal people and their lifestyle made her realise the difference between the two cultures. She states that in the Aboriginal culture, "you didn't really own anything. […] There seemed to be no idea of competing with each other to get more food, or more land, or a better house – the things that people competed over in my culture […]. In Aboriginal culture, the best way to survive was through sharing and collaborating" (228-29). Therefore, it might be stated that both the Aboriginal people and the white settlers were acting according to their own belief systems which they believed were the 'normal.' However, the 'normal' for the white settlers was much more destructive when it is compared to the perspective of the 'normal' of the Aboriginal people. Moreover, the Aboriginals' hunter-gatherer lifestyle constructs the idea in the settlers' minds that they do not claim or own the land by any means: "There were no signs that the blacks felt the place belonged to them. They had no fences that said *this is mine*. No house that said, *this is our home*. There were no fields or flocks that said, *we have put the labour of our hands into this place*" (Grenville *The Secret River* 93). For the white settlers, thus, the Aboriginals do not claim the land as they do not put their labour into it. Plumwood argues that "[t]heir [the colonised's] trace in the land is denied, and they are represented as *inessential* as their land and their labour embodied in it is taken over as 'nature'" (*Environmental Culture* 104). She also points out that

> Eurocentric framework led colonisers such as Australians in the past to believe about indigenous people: that they were semi-animals, without worthwhile knowledge, agriculture, culture, or technology, that they were wandering nomads with no ties to the land, and were without religion. They failed completely to understand the relationship between Aboriginal people and the land they took, or to recognise indigenous management practices. (*Environmental Culture* 118)

The belittlement of Aboriginal people as a lesser human being and the colonisers' lack of interest in their land managements were rooted in the colonial mind-set that justified

humans, especially white European humans, as masters of nature. Within the context of environmental racism, it can be argued that the idea of private property and Aboriginal people's representation as *inessential*, enabled white settlers to "damage [the colonised lands'] environments on the basis of cultural attributes directly or indirectly associated with their race" (Huggan and Tiffin 4). Therefore, the concept of land ownership of the Europeans is imposed on the Australian land and rationalised by anthropocentrism, which underlines the inferiority of nature according to the 'rationality' of humans, while the Eurocentric mind-set paved the way for European ways to be imposed on colonised lands by claiming non-European people as primitive and closer to nature.

Eurocentric and anthropocentric discourses also imposed the lie of *terra nullius* which eventually enabled and justified the settlers' will to set borders and claim ownership of the land. However, as the existence of the Aboriginal people could not be denied, another way of justification was needed. For that reason, as Albert Memmi argues, "a mythical portrait of the colonised" is constructed by the colonisers in order to justify their actions; this myth usually involves the idea that the colonised is "unbelievably lazy" and the coloniser has "a virtuous taste for action" (12). In *The Secret River*, colonisers' attitude towards the Aboriginal people resembles this. In the minds of the settlers, the Aboriginal people are 'uncivilised savages' who are a part of nature and do not claim the ownership of the land, because rather than work like adults, they are just "like children, they did not plant today so that they could eat tomorrow" and "wandered about, taking food as it came under their hands" (*The Secret River* 141). Adams points out that "[n]ature (and the peoples who subsisted through its direct exploitation) was not treated as diverse and unique, and not engaged with on its own terms" ("Nature" 43). The Aboriginal people were not only standardised but were also categorised. The blacks, according to Thornhill, come in two sorts. The first type is the visible ones who are living in the settlement, whereas the second type is the invisible ones, living on the edge of civilisation, which is the forest (90-93). The ones living in the forest, who are the unknown ones, create a threat and a source of fear for the settlers. However, both of the types are considered as 'wild' or 'uncivilised' throughout the novel. Thornhill's generalisation of the natives into two types is related to Albert Memmi's idea that "the colonised's depersonalisation is what one might call the mark of the plural. The

colonised is never characterised in an individual manner; he is entitled only to drown in an anonymous collectivity ('They are this.' 'They are all the same.')" (129). This 'mythical portrait' is accomplished in *The Secret River* by settlers through connecting the Aboriginal race to the natural environment, which constructs a barrier between the settlers and the Aboriginal people, a barrier that enables the settlers to see the natives as 'the Other.' By stereotyping Aboriginal people into one category, the dominion and destruction of both natural environments and its inhabitants were sustained.

Another key point is the fact that, Thornhill, throughout the novel, represents the anthropocentric discourse of the European colonists. Although there is an uneasy awareness that the land is inhabited by and belongs to the Aboriginals, Thornhill still wants to own it: "He let himself imagine it: standing on the crest of that slope, looking down over his own place. Thornhill's Point. It was a piercing hunger in his guts to own it. To say *mine*, in a way he had never been able to say *mine* of anything at all" (*The Secret River* 106). The feeling of being an outsider is quickly dislocated with the idea that the settlers' actions are fair because more 'civilised' people are setting themselves up for the 'wild' land which is trodden only by black men. In addition, owning the land is an easy process for the settlers. As Thornhill describes, "all a person need do was find a place no one had already taken. Plant a crop, build a hut, call the place Smith's or Flanagan's, and out-stare anyone who said otherwise" (*The Secret River* 121). Thornhill, then, becomes obsessed with the idea of owning his own land and, therefore, his tone gradually changes. In the chapter titled "A Clearing in the Forest," the narration puts emphasis on Thornhill's demanding and dominating tone by repeatedly pointing out the words "his own" and "mine" (*The Secret River* 133). In fact, Thornhill is eager to "[n]ot simply owning it: but naming it after himself!" (105). In the hundred acres he bought and named as "Thornhill's Point," he thinks that "everything I see, I own" (*The Secret River* 153). In fact, the power to name brings along the right to claim. Naming something leads to the idea that the person who names, actually owns the thing that is being named. Thornhill's ownership of the land is explained in detail as such:

> He took off his hat with an impulse to feel the air around his head. *His own air!* That tree, its powdery bark flaking around the trunk: *his!* That tussock of grass, each coarse strand haloed by the sunlight: *his own!* Even the

> mosquitoes, humming around his ears, *belonged to him*. (133) (emphasis mine)

He claims ownership of the air, the trees, the animals, upon nature itself. Thornhill's enthusiasm for owning land represents British imperialism, characterised by the "obsession with dominion and control" which is based on the belief that "understanding of nature implies domination of nature by man" (Capra 22). In this aspect, Thornhill's discourse resembles Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), the novel that carried the anthropocentric legacy of British imperialism (Opperman 188). Both characters are white European males, claiming the ownership of a foreign land where they live involuntarily by imposing dominion and control. The resemblance of Thornhill's and Crusoe's anthropocentric discourses can be observed in Robinson's following words:

> *My island* was now peopled, and I thought myself very rich in Subjects; and it was a merry reflection which I frequently made, how like a king I looked. First of all, the whole country was *my own mere property*; so that I had an undoubted right of dominion. Secondly *my people* were perfectly subjected: I was absolute lord and lawgiver; they all owed their lives to me. (Defoe 207) (emphasis mine)

Just as Crusoe claims he owns the island and the people on it, Thornhill claims he owns the environment and its natural surroundings. Thornhill, then, in order to prove his ownership, marks the land with his "labour" and plants seeds to send a message "like hoisting a flag on a pole" (*The Secret River* 142), and builds fences to create a border. Thornhill, thus, is obsessed with the idea of defining his own nationhood where he can preserve his humanity by proving his ownership, and by doing so he eventually deprives the Aboriginal people of their own sense of belonging.

Unlike the Aboriginal people, the European way of proving ownership is by having private property. Nature, ergo, provides the materials for private property, since in the imperial mind-set, nature acts only as a commodity. By the seventeenth century, with the Scientific Revolution, the image of the environment as 'mother-earth' that should be nourished and protected was replaced with the idea that considered nature as a machine. Francis Bacon, likewise, influenced the anthropocentric discourse of the seventeenth century by claiming that the material progress of human benefit lies within the

domination of nature. For Bacon, "[n]ature must be 'bound into service' and made a 'slave,' put 'in constraint,' and 'molded' by the mechanical arts" (qtd. in Merchant, *Radical Ecology* 45). Furthermore, this ideology is also closely connected with the European imperialist ideology. Based on this discourse, the domination of nature – for example, owning it as a property, naming it, and making changes that destroy the balance of the ecosystem by the colonisers – is justified. Combined with anthropocentrism, the Aboriginal people's lack of interest in private property due to their cultural traditions encourages Thornhill and the other settlers to make an effort to turn the land into their own property:

> Chopping, clearing, building, he was discovering a new William Thornhill, though: a man who could *labour against wilderness* until it yielded up a dwelling. Their round of scraped and beaten earth grew with every day that passed. The place was full of the sound of themselves – the chopping down the trees, the crackling as they burnt the heaps they cut, the thud of the pick into the earth. (*The Secret River* 160) (emphasis mine)

Thornhill, on this basis, believes that he is cultivating the land to provide a civilised lifestyle for his family in this untouched 'wilderness.' Hamilton argues that "wilderness is not a place but an ideology about place that has complex material implications" (145). Wilderness equals *terra nullius*, which is an idea that invites colonisers to 'discover' or 'explore' lands that have been occupied by other cultures and habitants for centuries. For Thornhill, for example, Australia is "the emptiest place in the world" (101). In this sense, within the colonial mind-set, wilderness is the opposite of civilisation; it is a place where correction is needed. Cronon points out that wilderness is "quite profoundly a human creation" (60) and continues as such:

> As late as the eighteenth century, the most common usage of the word 'wilderness' in the English language referred to landscapes that generally carried adjectives far different from the ones they attract today. To be a wilderness then was to be 'deserted,' 'savage,' 'desolate,' 'barren' — in short, a 'waste,' the word's nearest synonym. Its connotations were anything but positive, and the emotion one was most likely to feel in its presence was 'bewilderment'— or terror. (61)

The phrase "labour against wilderness" not only describes Thornhill's actions but also defines the settlers' mind-sets about the landscape because it represents white settlers'

will to dominate colonised lands and their colonial mind-sets that are triggered by anthropocentrism. For example, "[e]very tree – apart from the one on which Sal marked the weeks – was hacked at with the axe until it fell. Every bush was grubbed out, every loose rock was rolled away and the whole lot was fenced. As far as this bumpy land could be, a protective circle around the hut was flattened" (249). By recreating the place of humans in nature, "the category of human itself and of the way in which the construction of ourselves *against* nature has been and remains complicit in colonialist and racist exploitation from the time of imperial conquest to the present day" (Huggan and Tiffin 6). Therefore, as Opperman demonstrates, "[m]astery of nature is closely linked with racist ideologies, Eurocentric colonialist discourses, and imperialist power politics" (187). Hence, the destruction and domination of the natural environments is embowered under the expressions such as 'development,' 'progress,' and 'bringing civilisation' to the 'primitive wilderness.'

As Thornhill's "labour against wilderness" continues and the clearing of the land advances, the distinction between 'civilisation' and nature magnifies. This distinction is a sign of progress in the settlers' eyes, "with each day that passed, a little more progress could be measured: one more tree cut down, one more yard of bushes cleared, another length of fence" (*The Secret River* 250). It is considered as progress due to the fact that it makes it easier for the settlers to separate themselves from the natural environment by destroying the unknown parts of the land, which allows them to believe they are closer to civilisation. *Thornhill's Point* becomes a safe zone, whereas the forest is a horrible place where the people who were fooled by the absence of walls vanish into the "endless formless distance" (178). This separation also affects the relationship between the settlers and the Aboriginal people, and strengthens the attitude of 'us vs. them' by 'othering' the Aboriginal people. Nevertheless, no matter how Thornhill internalises the land and how much labour he puts in it, Aboriginal people are still the original and true owners of the place. This fact, however, is ignored by the settlers. Ironically, the Aboriginals who enter into Thornhill's 'property' are considered as intruders. In addition, to make matters even worse, Sal comments on the issue as "coming and going is one thing, but coming and not going, that's something else" (Grenville 204). The irony in this comment is the fact that they are in fact the ones who come and refuse to

leave. Instead of asking the questions such as “Who is the real intruder here?, Who is trespassing on whose land?” the settlers immediately took on the role of the host and forced the Aboriginals to play the parts of unwanted guests.

Other than Thornhill, there are two other important representatives of the white settlers that might be discussed in relation to postcolonial ecocritical theory and to Grenville’s discussion: Blackwood and Smasher. These two characters are the complete opposite of each other and represent two extremes. The first one is Smasher Sullivan, whose attitude towards the Aboriginal people is cruel and abusive. He is responsible for the abuse, rape, and murder of numerous Aboriginal people. He does not consider them as human beings who deserve equal rights as him. On top of that, he also brags about the chopped off ears of an Aboriginal that he carries in his pocket like a trophy (267). Grenville, in one of her essays, talks about the violent actions of the white settlers which she came across while doing research to write the novel. She states that “[t]here was – to take just one documented example – the settler in Queensland who had killed 15 Aboriginal people and cut off their ears by way of trophy. He had 30 ears nailed to the wall of his hut” (“Unsettling” n.p). Smasher’s violence, therefore, is based on an actual white settler in Australia. Secondly, the other end of the spectrum of the white settlers is Tom Blackwood. He is the only one in the novel who tries to have a harmonious relationship with the Aboriginals and the one that accepts the Aboriginal presence and rights. His motto is “Ain’t nothing in this world just for the taking. A man got to pay a fair price for taking. Matter of give a little, take a little” (104). He is, therefore, sympathetic towards the natives who he thinks are “quiet and peaceful” (210) and he even has an Aboriginal wife and a child. As a matter of fact, Blackwood, unlike the other settlers, had not cleared his place, “there was no bald patch defined by heaps of dead wood that marked where civilisation began and ended. This was a place where clearing and forest lived together on the same ground” (206). Thus, he is respectful both to the Aboriginal people and to the natural environment. These two obviously different characters are used as a tool in Grenville’s narrative in order to show ‘savagery’ and ‘civilisation’ are not qualities that can be related to any race or skin colour. A white man can bring destruction and death through brutalism or can maintain a harmonious and a peaceful relationship with his natural surroundings, depending on his own choices.

Blackwood's function is to show that there could have been a version of this reality where violence is avoided, and peaceful and harmonious relationships are maintained whereas Smasher's function is to show how bad and brutal it can be when the Western anthropocentric discourse is fully embodied.

Smasher's true brutalism is revealed when he shows Thornhill the black woman he kidnapped and chained, and excitedly talks about raping her multiple times (252). As Shiva, a theorist in the field of ecofeminism emphasises, "the rape of the Earth and rape of women are intimately linked - both metaphorically, in shaping world-views, and materially, in shaping women's everyday lives" (xvi). This connection between nature and women is described by Plumwood as follows: "Women are historically linked to 'nature' as reproductive bodies and through their supposedly greater emotionality" ("Decolonizing" 55). Therefore, the exploitation of nature and the exploitation of women are closely connected with each other. In addition, just as the non-human world and the natural environments are considered as inferior to humanity, women are seen as inferior beings compared to men. Within the colonial venture, there is masculinity because it is a male dominated practice and ideology, therefore the patriarchal oppression of colonialism can be observed through Smasher in *The Secret River*. Western patriarchal discourse had an immense effect on environmental philosophy. Plumwood resembles the relationship between nature and reason to the relationship between a husband and a wife or a master and a slave and further explains the issue in the following words: "Reason in the western tradition has been constructed as the privileged domain of the master, who has conceived nature as a wife or subordinate other encompassing and representing the sphere of materiality, subsistence and the feminine which the master has split off and constructed as beneath him" (*Feminism* 3). Nature, similar to women, is considered as a passive inferior being. It is, hence, defined as an empty resource open to be looked down on and whose dominion is 'normal.' Consequently, a double-colonisation issue occurs with women, especially Aboriginal women, who are particularly close to the natural environment. As a female writer, Kate Grenville's criticism towards male domination, oppression of women and domination of nature, and the relationship between them in colonialism, and therefore, her female perspective can be observed through her characters, especially Smasher. Within this

context, Smasher clearly represents the extreme side of the colonial mind-set that assumes the ultimate superiority of white men over the non-humans and non-white races.

Although "newcomers often depended on indigenous knowledge for their survival" (Mar and Edmonds 342), long-term settlers' "hubris and greed drove the seizure of New World and prevented significant learning from indigenous people [and] caused much nineteenth-century environmental devastation" (Gaynor 293). Thornhill, due to his lack of knowledge about the landscape, fails to construct a 'civilised' life for himself and his family with his attempts to alter the 'wilderness' to create Thornhill's Point. After numerous frustrations about not being able to grow his crops and not being able to hunt either, Thornhill internally realises that his so-called 'superiority' is not going to help him and his family to survive on the land. Despite the Aboriginal people's 'savage' qualities that make them 'inferior' such as their lack of interest in private property, building houses and fences, and planting crops, their survival skills are far more advanced than the white settlers'. He realises that rather than his family who maintain a civilised life, the 'savage' Aboriginal people are the ones living in prosperity:

> They did not seem to work to come by the little they needed. They spent time every day filling their dishes and catching the creatures that hung from their belts. But afterwards they seemed to have plenty of time left for sitting by their fires talking and laughing and stroking their chubby limbs of their babies. (*The Secret River* 229)

Thornhill describes this disturbance in the power balance by saying "in the world of these naked savages, it seemed everyone was gentry" (230). This comment parallels James Cook's famous reflection on Aboriginal people where he stated that they are "far more happier than we Europeans" (qtd. in Gaynor 274). As Herrero puts forth, "[h]e [Thornhill] eventually realises that their difference sometimes implies a certain degree of superiority" (93). The supremacy that Thornhill describes is due to the difference between European and Aboriginal knowledge and management of nature because as Bruce Rose claims, Aboriginal management "links people to their environment rather than giving them dominion over it. Aboriginal relationships to land are defined in terms of culture and site protection, land usage and harvesting of natural resources" (qtd. in

Langton 94). As Kossew argues, "[i]n each meeting with the Aboriginal people, Thornhill feels ignorant rather than knowledgeable, powerless rather than powerful, lacking the understanding to translate either their words or their culture" (16). The fact that the Aboriginal people are intimate with their surroundings gives them a superiority in the natural environment. For example, it is stated in the novel that the "only time we [the settlers] see them [the Aboriginals] is when they want us to" (102) whereas they can see the whites whenever they want; they are also able to appear and disappear without making a noise in the trees and in the bushes due to their close connection to nature. Thus, Thornhill is aware of the fact that the Aboriginals' peaceful relationship with nature and their culture allow them to be happier. The Europeans, on the other hand, are experiencing alienation and having a hard time adapting to the Australian life because rather than learning or trying to adapt to their surroundings, their solution is to adapt their surroundings to their own benefits.

The climactic massacre scene of the novel is quite catastrophic and shows the true violence of Australia's history because it becomes clear that the settlers' dream of owning their own land becomes a horrible and bloody nightmare for the Aboriginal people. These violent actions were applied to the indigenous people and were supported by rules and regulations constructed by the colonisers. Adams asserts that "[r]egulation seemed essential to the efficient and long-term success of natural resource exploitation and agriculture" ("Nature" 31). Not only the natural environments were altered but also its inhabitants were exposed to the colonisers' environmental and social rules. By emphasising the wildness of the environment and the 'savagery' of its inhabitants, the destruction of both was rationalised. The Governor in the novel, for example, declares on 22 March 1814 that "the black natives of the colony have manifested a strong and sanguinary spirit of animosity and hostility towards the British inhabitants" and that is why if the British settlers see "any natives coming armed, or in a hostile manner without arms, or in an unarmed parties exceeding six in number to any farm belonging to British subjects" the settlers have to first ask the natives to leave the farm in a *civilised manner*, however, if the natives persist in remaining "they are then to be driven away by force of arms by the settlers themselves" (*The Secret River* 266). This is, certainly, a polite way of saying the British settlers are allowed to shoot the Aboriginal people and will not be

found guilty of any charges. Historically, as illustrated by Mar and Edmonds, in 1795 Lieutenant-Governor William Paterson ordered the white settlers to "shoot any Darug people on sight and hang the bodies from gibbets as a warning to others" and again in 1816 Governor Macquarie announced "unwillingly" to hang the guilty Aboriginals, "to inflict terrible and exemplary punishment upon them" (344). Of course, historically, the resistance of Aboriginal people occurred because they "experienced the arrival of British colonists as an invasion" (Mar and Edmonds 342). However, the barbaric and cannibalistic attitudes of the Aboriginal people which is told by the settlers in their stories were rather false. By the late 1820s, as settlers' eagerness to own land, and competition for food and natural resources increased, the tension between the settlers and the Aboriginal people also escalated. Curthoys and Mitchell demonstrate the Aboriginal resistance as follows:

> Time and again, Indigenous men responded to the settler presence and its concomitant destruction of the foundations of Indigenous life, economy, and society, by killing or stealing stock and stealing other sources of food. Very often, Indigenous men attacked settlers in response to settler men's abuse of, or unlawful relationships with, Indigenous women. (13)

The conflict between the settlers and the Aboriginal people was in fact a reality, which often ended with blood on each side. However, the consequences for the Aboriginal people were much more severe. For Europeans, killing the Aboriginal people was similar to killing an animal or clearing the forest because they were considered as closer to the natural environment and less of a human than the Europeans. Therefore, white settlers allowed the "institutionalised killing of non-human Others" (Wolfe 39), which is justified by the dehumanisation of the Aboriginal people. In 1803 there were 6-8,000 Aboriginal people living in Van Diemen's Land, but by 1838 there were only 60 Aboriginal people who survived the British attacks (Mar and Edmonds 347). Thus, the number of deaths was much higher on the Aboriginal side; while their population rapidly decreased, the number of newly arriving white settlers immensely increased. The number of deaths on the Aboriginal side was incredibly high but lacked any kind of consequence on the white settlers' side because of the dehumanisation of the Aboriginal people by Western imperialist discourses. As Huggan and Tiffin argue, "assuming a natural prisonisation of humans and human interest over those of other species on earth,

we are both generating and repeating the racist ideologies of imperialism on a planetary scale" (6). Likewise, in *The Secret River*, settlers, because of their superiority complexes and anthropocentric mind-sets, rationalise the murder of the Aboriginal people. Thornhill encounters numerous dead Aboriginal bodies killed by the settlers. Moreover, with the Governor's permission, the settlers raid the Aboriginal camp with guns and shot every man, woman, and child without mercy.

The natural environment of Australia was closely connected with its inhabitants, therefore, as Foster and Clark argue, "robbing the periphery of its natural wealth and exploiting ecological resources" went alongside with the "genocide inflicted on the indigenous populations" (188). However, the violence that had been committed against the Aboriginal people by the white settlers and the massacre become a part of the Great Australian Silence which is mentioned in *The Secret River* as follows: "The Gazette did not mention the woman Thornhill could not forget… Or the boy, arching like a fish against the hook in Sagitty's damper" (323). They also promise not to tell anyone and keep their violent actions as a secret: "Nobody won't never know, I swear, he [Smasher] said. Not our wives even. Not anyone other than us. And we ain't telling" (229). The savagery of the massacre scene where the settlers mercilessly murder even babies, proves the settlers' belief that they are civilised and superior to be wrong completely. From that point on, Thornhill's guilt or his attempt to justify their actions become redundant since it is obvious that he profited undeniably after the Aboriginal people were killed. Also, no matter how hard they try to keep their actions in the dark, the natural environment discloses their secret. Accordingly, as Kossew accentuates, the landscape of the massacre "signif[ies] the silence of the historical record" (16). As it is stated in the novel, "[n]othing was written in the ground. Nor was it written on any page. But the blankness itself might tell the story to anyone who had eyes to see" (325). Their actions had devastating repercussions on the natural environment and as a result, the soil of the site of the massacre became so infertile that "not so much as a blade of grass had grown there ever since" (Grenville 325). McGonegal points out that the "blankness—the secret gaps, occluded histories, and suppressed memories—constitute the forgotten colonial archive that must be opened if reconciliation is even to begin" (75). Grenville is aware of the fact that these violent actions towards both the

Aboriginal people and to their natural environments are a part of the silenced past of Australia. Similar to her great-great-great grandfather Solomon Wiseman's story, Thornhill's participation in the massacre will be forgotten and he will be remembered as a man who just 'took up' land; "[h]e knew it was there, and his children might remember, but his children's children would walk about on floorboards, and never know what was beneath their feet" (316).

At the end of the book, Thornhill accomplished what he wanted by buying more lands, earning good amounts of money, driving the Aboriginal people away, and gaining prestige and respect. As it is stated, there were "no more trouble from the blacks, new settlers had taken up land in every bend. Unmolested, their crops and families flourished, and trade on the river was good" (313). However, although "[f]or the newcomers, William Thornhill was something of a king" (314), he does not feel fulfilled; as Grenville points out, "there's a toxic silence at the heart of his life" ("Unsettling" n.p). Deep down inside, Thornhill knows his efforts to make the land his own are in vain because no matter how much he repeats himself that this is his place, "the winds in the leaves up on the ridge was saying something else entirely" (139). His melancholy is due to the fact that "[n]o man has worked harder than he had done, and had been rewarded for his labour. He had about him near a thousand pounds in cash, he had three hundred acres and a piece of paper to prove it was all his, and that fine house with stone lions on the gateposts. He would have said he had everything a man could want" (*The Secret River* 329). However, despite his 'hard work,' he knows his property can easily perish if they left, because he knows that "it [will] not take long for Thornhill's Point to melt back into the forest" (295). Also, no matter how much trees he cuts or fences he builds, he knows he cannot overpower the "everlasting forest" because it cannot be "got rid of" and can only be "pushed back" (250). As a result, in the end, his actions "[do] not feel like a triumph" (334). Despite his best effort to make the land his own, he lacked something the Aboriginal people had, a sense of belonging to "a place that was part of his flesh and spirit" (329).

In conclusion, through *The Secret River*, Kate Grenville declares that the settlers in the novel and their future descendants are foreign intruders who destroyed the people who

actually had been “at one with the place” (“Unsettling” n.p). As a white Australian, it is interesting to see that Grenville is criticising her own descendants by pointing out the faults in their mind-sets and actions. By forcing their truths and cultures on the Aboriginal people, white settlers not only murdered them but also destroyed the balance of the Australian ecosystem by breaking the harmonious connection between the Aboriginal people and the natural environment. Grenville also puts an emphasis on the superiority complex of the white colonisers and their anthropocentric discourses, and how these ideologies were rooted deep in the colonial mind-set, and used to ‘other’ the colonised people, particularly those who had close relationships with their natural environment. Therefore, in her novel, Grenville underlines the conflict “[b]etween human nature and the nature that is destroyed by human culture” (Soper 119).

CHAPTER II:
DESTRUCTION OF NATURE AFTER THE ARRIVAL OF "THE HORIZON PEOPLE":
KİM SCOTT'S *THAT DEADMAN DANCE*

"The song is gone; the dance
is secret with the dancers in the earth,
the ritual useless, and the tribal story
lost in an alien tale." (Judith Wright "Bora Ring" 1-4)

History of Australia as a settler colony has been told in many ways throughout history. Although the result is always the same, the story changes depending on the perspectives, whether it is told by the Europeans or by the Aboriginal people. Within this context, Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance* (2010) presents what the Aboriginal people's perspective was like from the start of the colonisation period to the end. Unlike Kate Grenville's *The Secret River*, which focused on the white settlers' mind-sets and ideologies, *That Deadman Dance* focuses on the Aboriginal side of the story and how they were affected from the colonisation period. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to analyse the biological and environmental aspect of British settler colonialism in the nineteenth century Australia from the Aboriginal point of view, and how the process of colonialism had devastating repercussions on the natural environment and on the Aboriginal people by studying the novel in detail within the framework of postcolonial ecocriticism theory.

Born in 1957, Kim Scott has published 5 novels[10] which mainly concern about the history of Australia, the Aboriginal people, and the impacts of European imperialism upon them. As an author whose ancestors were the Noongar people of Western Australia, Scott carries out the traditions of his Aboriginal culture through his books by turning history into fiction. For example, his second novel *Benang: From the Heart* (1999) deals with the issue of the forced assimilation of the Aboriginal people into the

[10] *True Country* (1993), *Benang: From the Heart* (1999), *Lost* (2006), *That Deadman Dance* (2010), *Taboo* (2017).

white society by removing the Aboriginal children from their families and forcing them to 'breed' with white people. *Benang: From the Heart* has won two awards; Western Australian Premier's Book Awards in 1999 and Miles Franklin Literary Award in 2000. In fact, Scott was the first indigenous Aboriginal writer to have ever won the Miles Franklin Literary Award, which is Australia's most prestigious literary award (Hughes-d'Aeth 22). After his success with that novel, he wrote *That Deadman Dance* in 2010 which is a novel that engages with the issue of Australia's colonisation period in the nineteenth century which won the Miles Franklin Literary Award again in 2011.

When his works are observed, one might say that Scott uses history, especially his own people's history, as an inspiration for his literary works. As a matter of fact, he points out that some of the indigenous names in *That Deadman Dance* such as Wunyeran, Manit, and Binyan are directly taken from his own Noongar ancestors (*That Deadman* 284). Scott also argues that the novel is inspired by "the history of early contact between the Aboriginal people - the Noongar - and Europeans in the area of [his] hometown of Albany, Western Australia, a place known by some historians as the 'friendly frontier'" (*That Deadman* 283). In an interview in 2011 with ABC News Australia, Scott stated that the phrase 'friendly frontier' matches the response of the Aboriginal people being inclusive and accommodating to the new arrivals rather than being resistant and resenting. The narrative of the novel, therefore, represents the Aboriginal people's optimistic point of view, their hospitality, and their willingness to be friendly towards the white settlers in the early nineteenth century. Scott explains the reason why he wrote the novel in such a way as follows:

> I wanted to build a story from their confidence, their inclusiveness and sense of play, and their readiness to appropriate new cultural forms - language and songs, guns and boats - as soon as they became available. Believing themselves manifestation of a spirit of a place impossible to conquer, they appreciated reciprocity and the nuances of cross-cultural exchange. (*That Deadman* 284)

However, Scott also clearly emphasises the disadvantages of this optimistic approach of the Aboriginal people while facing colonisation, which allowed the white settlers to seize the land more easily. The novel covers the time period from 1826 to 1844 in detail

and shows the mind-sets of both of the cultures; how the ‘friendliness’ gradually disappeared, how the ‘othering’ process occurred, and in which state these two different cultures clashed. The novel also illustrates the devastating impact of European imperialism both on the environment and on the indigenous population of Australia while presenting the process of the Aboriginal people’s realisation.

As a Noongar Australian, Scott aimed to capture the Aboriginal experience, spirituality, culture, and traditions. *That Deadman Dance* does not have a linear or a chronological plot that only focuses on one story or one character; but rather it moves from time to time, character to character, and race to race. Kim Scott states that historical novelists insist on working on easily available historical narratives, as observed in Grenville’s *The Secret River*, where she was trying to find “a place for herself that she’s comfortable within this pretty harsh history” (qtd. in Brewster 237). However, Scott also argues that although he was also trying to re-work the history in order to find a story that he can tell for himself and his people, what makes *That Deadman Dance* different from *The Secret River*, or any other white Australian historical novels is the fact that colonised people are “carrying the legacy of oppression” (qtd. in Brewster 237) which is echoed through their works and literature. For Scott, and for authors whose ancestors experienced colonisation, writing about the past is more personal. It is his people’s history, ergo, his own history. These stories about the past are passed down from generation to generation and by writing about his culture, traditions, and past as a novel, Scott aims to break the silenced history of Australia.

The narrative of *That Deadman Dance* mainly focuses on Bobby Wabalanginy, a Noongar boy who is smart, brave, and curious. Bobby is eager to be friends with the white settlers and joins them to help them carry out their plans and expeditions. Although some elderly Aboriginal people foreshadow the future of their land, Bobby wants to create a co-existing society for both cultures. However, despite his best efforts, he eventually realises that the development in their land is not benefiting his people but rather gradually destroying it.

In the novel, changes that disturb the Aboriginal people occur gradually; rather than instantly capturing the land through military forces or firearms, settler colonialism and its impacts happen as a slow process by infiltrating to the land and changing the social, political, and cultural aspects of the land. According to Huggan and Tiffin, "in the colonies of occupation, these radical inequalities or exchanges seemed most evident – or at least initially – in the military and political arenas, while in the settler colonies it was the results of environmental imperialism that were often most immediately clear" (7). Some of the main issues that raise the awareness in the Aboriginal people in the novel, especially in Bobby, are the fact that the settlers' friendliness is an illusion, the destructive changes in the natural environment that came with the white people, and the negative biological aspect of their presence. Alfred Crosby defines these biological and ecological aspects as "ecological imperialism" and as "the biological expansion of Europe" and argues that "the success of European imperialism has a biological and an ecological component" (7). Ecological imperialism, according to Foster and Brett, occurs through "robbing the periphery of its natural wealth and exploiting ecological resources" (189). As the natural environment of the colonies are considered as open resources for economic power and profit, they are exploited. This exploitation of natural environment is identified by Opperman as "[t]he colonial practices of farming, plantation of crops, livestock raising, hunting, clearance of trees, and the introduction of non-native species to the regions of the native biota" (182). In this sense, it can be argued that the invasion of Australia was mainly a matter of environmental and biological expansion, rather than a military one. Although Europeans depended on their use of firearms, it was more than a fight between firearms and spears. Rather, the expansion was accomplished through introducing new diseases, flora and fauna to the land, meanwhile destroying the existing ecosystem which decreased the indigenous population rapidly. In *That Deadman Dance*, it is possible to observe all these biological and environmental expansions of settler colonialism.

The first contact between the Aboriginal people and the European settlers is described in the novel as if someone were telling a story:

> [O]nce upon a time there was a captain on a wide sea, a rough and windswept sea, and his good barque was pitched and tossed something cruel… The captain—his ship bashed and groaning, the strained rigging humming—sailed parallel to this hint of haven and the mostly bilious passengers resigned themselves to whatever fate offered. (6)

The novel does not cover the time period of the first contact, when Captain James Cook sailed to the shores of Australia in 1770, and claimed the land on behalf of the British Monarch. The story begins years later; and the arrival of the first Europeans is described as how the Aboriginal people pass on the story from generation to generation, through songs, dances, and stories. As Konishi and Nugent point out, unlike Europeans, "indigenous people's perceptions of outsiders were expressed in a variety of forms other than writing: oral stories, dances, songs, art and ritual" (45). As a matter of fact, it is stated that Menak, who is the tribal leader of the Noongar people, "had seen ships come and go since he was a child, had seen his father dance with the earliest visitors. Not that he really remembered the incident, more the dance and song that lived on" (8). Menak knows the stories of his father and the first arrivals, and he is trying to continue those manners by welcoming the new settlers by their traditional ways: "He washed his hands, continuing the ceremony - the ceremony - for greeting people when they came from beyond the horizon" (8). Although he is suspicions about these new arrivals, the *Horizon People* as they call, who "looked around nervously, wanting to recognise the scent of the land, of soil and earth" (7), he welcomes them kindly.

The clash between the two cultures' mentalities is mostly moderated by Bobby Wabalanginy, the 'hero' of the novel, who plays a significant role in terms of relationships between the Aboriginal people and the white settlers. He is a brave and clever boy who acts as a bridge between the two cultures. The name Bobby Wabalanginy is the representation of this cross-culture as 'Bobby' is a name given to him by the white settlers because his Noongar name was hard to be pronounced by them. Naming is a form of claiming. As Adams argues, "[c]olonialism promoted the naming and classification of both people and places, as well as nature, in each case with the aim of control" ("Nature" 24). Wabalanginy, which is the name that the white settler cannot, or would not, pronounce means "all of us playing together" (28). In fact, this is an accurate reflection of their situation; Bobby strives to create a co-existence, an

environment where they can actually all play together, however the white settlers are not willing to even try. Bobby is also the representation of the courage and the connectedness of the Aboriginal people to their culture and natural surroundings. Kim Scott in an interview argues that Bobby is "a character who is so confident in himself and his heritage that he'll willingly and readily appropriate new cultural products, new ways of doing things. He just does not have it in his mind that anyone could ever want to conquer another's country, because he was so connected with it" (qtd in. Brewster 230). Bobby considers his land as impossible to conquer, and his connection to it as unbreakable. Carl Jung, who is interested in the relationship between psyche and matter, explains the Aboriginal perspective of land as follows: "Certain Australian Aborigines assert that one cannot conquer foreign soil, because in it there dwell strange ancestor-spirits who reincarnate themselves in the new-born. There is a great psychological truth in this. The foreign land assimilates its conqueror" (49). Therefore, with confidence in his land and his heritage, Bobby takes the role of a cultural intermediary; he willingly tries to accommodate to the white way of living, but he also never deserts his own people and culture. He is the embodiment of the Aboriginal culture and attitude towards both natural environment and indigenous culture, traditions, and spirituality.

In addition, he carries out the tradition of the 'Deadman Dance,' a mime like dancing practiced by his people on occasions for telling stories. In fact, 'Deadman Dance' takes its inspiration from the early British military drills in Australia. The dance is explained by Bobby as such: "You paint yourself in red ochre, neck to waist and wrist, and leave your hands all bare. White ochre on your thighs, but keep your calves and feet bare, like boots, see? A big cross of white clay painted on every chest" (48). This is an imitation of the British army's clothing in the nineteenth century, where they wore red uniforms with a white cross on their chest. Before Bobby, 'Deadman Dance' was done with an Elder, facing all other who stood shoulder to shoulder. Bobby, however, changes all that, he adds something of himself to the dance, makes everybody in the audience laugh. His unique worldview and his naiveness are quite apparent in this as he appropriates a serious, and in fact a violent, story from their past into a funny dance. These songs, dances, and rituals are a significant part of the Aboriginal people's culture and traditions. According to Bruce Rose, "Aboriginal 'management' of the environment is

understood through song and ceremony. It is seen to be more of an integrated process whereby knowledge of the natural world is gathered through personal experience and passed on through tradition to tradition" (qtd. in Langton 94). For Kim Scott, the Deadman Dance is "a powerful act of appropriation" or "the beginning of something like the end" because "it's a dead man doing it. But the fact that the Noongars appropriated the dance and the fact that you can write a novel as a Noongar person, is itself expressive of continuity" (qtd. in Brewster 231-32). Therefore, it might be stated that the 'Deadman Dance,' which gives the novel its title, has both metaphorical and literal meanings regarding the Aboriginal people and the white settler relationship. Literally, it represents the ways in which the Aboriginal people carry out their traditions through songs, dances, and rituals; metaphorically, on the other hand, it represents the adaptability of the Aboriginal people and their ability to change and accommodate themselves to new cultures, traditions, and people.

Moreover, Bobby's friendliness and his confidence in himself and his heritage are not easily shattered by the imperialist and anthropocentric discourses of the white settlers. As it was mentioned earlier, the invasion of Australia had been a slow process. As the biological and environmental expansion of the white settlers become more intense and more disruptive, like an invisible weapon used against the Aboriginal people, the trust relationship between them starts to fade.

One of the first indications of these biological and environmental expansion of the white settlers in *That Deadman Dance* are diseases, a new form of dying among the Aboriginal community after the arrival of the white settlers. Infectious diseases enabled the British biological expansion in the colonised lands. As Opperman claims, "the biological expansion significantly disturbed the ecological balance in practically every bioregion the British invaded" (182). Furthermore, Mar and Edmonds state that the "[f]irst contact was accompanied by the transmission of new diseases, which travelled ahead of the physical frontier along Indigenous trading and cultural networks" (342). Hence, these diseases brought by Europeans can be traced back to their first discovery of the land, before the settlement was even established. Captain James Cook and his crew, for example, carried many pathogens, including tuberculosis (Crosby 232). It is

possible to see this in *That Deadman Dance*, for example, among the white settlers in the novel, Dr Cross is repetitively mentioned as coughing with blood and has died coughing (18-19, 44, 118). This reference to coughing with blood indicates the sickness that the white settlers brought is tuberculosis. According to CDC, tuberculosis is a highly infectious disease that spreads through air, usually attacks the lungs, and causes coughing up blood. This disease was historically a very common problem in Australia. According to McCalman and Kippen, "[t]uberculosis remained a disproportionate killer of Aboriginal Australians until the last quarter of the twentieth century" (295). This is clearly a foreign, highly infectious, and a fatal disease that the Aboriginal people are not immune to, that is why the death rate is higher on the Aboriginal side.

Dying from bloody coughs become a widespread problem in the novel by killing the Aboriginal people in high rates. Although the Aboriginal population is decreasing rapidly, they are not able to comprehend the reason for their sickness or to relate it to the new European arrivals. Bobby, for example, refers to his parents' death as "his own mother and father forgetting how to breathe properly so they could only exhale and cough, always bent over, stooped, moving like their feet hurt from touching their very own earth" (89). Not only his mother and father, but his uncle Wunyern, who is Dr Cross's very close friend, dies coughing, too (98). Before these deaths in their community, at the beginning of the white settlers' arrival, the Aboriginal people's confidence in themselves based on their population-based superiority was high. Naturally, the white settlers are aware that they are "outnumbered" (*That Deadman* 63), and argue that "they [the Aboriginals] are so many more than we [the settlers]" (*That Deadman* 195). However, slowly but mercilessly, as "[t]he coughing [takes] very many away" (*That Deadman* 124), the power dynamics change because the Aboriginal population, which was once very high, begins to decline gradually.

Some of the settlers are aware that they are the cause of this problem that destroys the natural balance. For example, Mrs. Chaine who says, "our arrival means their death though we do not lift a hand" (118). This remark by Mrs. Chaine resembles Charles Darwin's following comments: "Wherever the European had trod, death seems to pursue the Aboriginal" (459). The British presence in the land moves beyond the

physical form into biological agents that allowed the invasion to be accomplished, which is explained by Merchant as follows: “European explorers and colonisers brought with them an ecological complex of diseases that devastated native peoples” (*Radical* 32). As a matter of fact, tuberculosis was not the only disease that Europeans brought to the land. In addition to tuberculosis, “shortly after the arrival of English observers on the east coast of Australia in 1789, smallpox altered the operation of Aboriginal life” (Hiscock 14). Due to smallpox, indigenous population decreased dramatically before the permanent British settlement in Australia was even established. In addition, sexually transmitted diseases and typhoid (‘colonial fever’) also took a tool in the Aboriginal population by reducing the fertility rates and killing Aboriginal people of all ages. McCalman and Kippen explain this change in the population based on diseases as follows: “In 1788, when the First Fleet of some 1,300 people landed at Botany Bay, the number of Aboriginal people was around 1 million, by the end of the nineteenth century the colonising population had grown to 3.5 million while the Aboriginal population had fallen precipitously” (295). Therefore, diseases allowed the biological expansion of Europe in Australia by creating a large-scale depopulation of Aboriginal people. Furthermore, in the novel, as the white settlers’ population grew, they became the power upholders in the land. As they began to abuse their power, the Aboriginal people began to realise the illusion of friendliness; however, they also came to realise that it was too late to resist them. Manit states that “fighting will not help us; we need guns like them, they are now more than us” (251). As it was impossible to fight the diseases the British brought with any weapon, Aboriginal people were powerless against the biological expansion. Within this sense, diseases were one of the weapons, in fact, a biological weapon, the white colonisers used to take control. Moreover, by the time the Aboriginal people realised they should fight against the white settles, whom they realised are the true perpetrators, their population-based superiority had diminished, hence making them powerless once again.

In addition to the fatal diseases, the settlers’ desire to establish agricultural development disturbs the natural balance of the Australian land immensely. Both the desire for an agricultural development and the tools and products that were used in these processes contributed to this environmental expansion of Europe in Australia. Unlike the diseases

that unwittingly benefited the Europeans by making Aboriginal people weaker and fewer in number, this enterprise for agricultural development was made purposely and openly after the settlement was formed. Adams argues that “colonial nature was made productive, but only through drastic restructuring. New species, new systems of production, new forms of social relations were all the out-workings of the colonial mind. Nature was conquered, made productive despite itself. People were dealt with in the same way” (“Nature” 43). As a result, the natural environment of Australia offered a great opportunity of economic profit for Europeans. Additionally, this idea of ‘opportunity’ is both created and supported by the mind-set that suggested the Australian land was empty because the Aboriginal people claimed no possession of the land. When it is combined with colonial discourse, this mind-set caused European agricultural structure to be imposed upon the land. Furthermore, Adams claims that “agriculture was the most favoured means of organising ‘nature’s government’” (“Nature” 27). Agriculture allowed the colonisers to control, manipulate, and change nature for their own benefits with the intention of economic profit. Correspondingly, in the novel, Dr Cross believes that “agricultural development was both inevitable and necessary” (25) for a sustainable settlement, because it would ensure their power over the land for a long duration.

Dr. Cross’ friendly relationship with the Aboriginal people, Geordie Chaine’s strategic plans, and the Governor’s way of administration complement each other in this process. First of all, Dr Cross is the primary character that plans this agricultural development. He constructs strategic and friendly relationships with the natives and prepares the land to be a property of his people and his country. Dr Cross is represented as an insightful character, he is aware of the impact of his people on the Australian environment and on the Aboriginal people. It is clearly emphasised that “he had friends among the natives” (45). In that sense, Cross’ mind-set resembles Blackwood in Grenville’s *The Secret River*. In fact, just like Blackwood, Cross believes that rather than exploiting the land, “there must be give and take” (45). However, like Blackwood, he embodies a hypocrisy that is caused by the deeply rooted colonial mind-set of the white people. It is stated that “Dr Cross knew the place. It was like a home to him” (14). He is also aware that the ‘progress’ in the land cannot be achieved without the help of the natives, however, he

also feels guilty because of the fact that their so called ‘development’ is benefiting his own people more than the true owners of the land. Aimé Césaire argues that due to the “progress” of colonialism, “societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary possibilities wiped out” and this destruction is accomplished and rationalised because “colonist Europe is dishonest in trying to justify its colonising activity” (43-45). Similarly, Cross embodies a colonial dishonesty because, despite this awareness, he also encourages settlers to take land, which might clearly be observed in the novel: “Dr Cross’s words passed among the crowd: there is land available at King George Town. Good land at King George Town” (17). Cross’s behaviours resemble Plumwood’s discussion about the European agricultural development in which “[t]he imposition of Eurocentric agricultural models presupposes a quiet, benign and malleable nature that imposes few limits on high-intensity tillage or grazing,” however, these impositions of agriculture were not only done for economic and political profit, but they were also the result of “the colonial failure to value the difference of Australian biodiversity” (“Decolonizing” 64). Actually, Cross’s hypocrisy arises concordantly; Cross is indeed aware of the Aboriginal biodiversity, what he lacks is appreciation. As Huggan and Tiffin state, “genuine curiosity about and respect for indigenous cultures, philosophies, and religions was rare, and even the most well-intentioned of missionaries, settlers, and administrators tended to conceive of themselves as conferring (or imposing) the gifts of civilisation” (7). Correspondingly, Cross is characterised by Scott as one of the ‘well-intentioned’ Europeans. For example, in his deathbed, Cross struggles with guilt and questions his people’s delinquency; his thoughts are as such: “Now men bragged of the land they’d been granted, and never thought that it was seized, was stolen. Why must it matter so much to him that the lives of the natives would be altered forever and their generosity and friendliness be betrayed?” (45). However, despite his guilt or sympathy towards the Aboriginal people, it is clearly emphasised that his ‘well-intentions’ are only benefiting himself and his own people. Settlers like Cross, who maintain a good relationship and communication with the native people are aware that the colonial idea that claims the ‘civilised’ and ‘superior’ whites is helping the ‘savage,’ and ‘backward’ indigenous people are nothing more than a deception. For example, when Wunyeran dies, Cross questions European

science, civilisation, and development as such: “What good was Cross’s science when it would not save his friend? What good was it to be civilised, when he could offer no more help than could this poor fellow’s own brother?” (99). Within this context, it can be stated that Dr Cross’s sympathy allows him to earn the Aboriginal people’s trust and create friendly relationships, which benefits those who succeed him.

After Cross is dead, Georgie Chaine takes his place as an authoritative figure. Chaine is the one who represents European imperialism in the novel and the one who allows the environmental expansion of Europe. Thanks to Cross, Chaine is able to form a partnership based on trust and mutual gain with most of the Aboriginal people, most importantly with Bobby. It is important to note that the characterisation in this novel does not aim to make the white settlers the antagonist. The settlers’ colonial mind-set is not directly given, but rather they remain as ambivalent perpetrators. Hughes-d’Aeth suggests that “Scott seems to insist that these people were not monsters, if only to then say: and that is precisely why they are monsters. Scott wants us to realise that the worst evil is utterly banal, hiding in plain sight in the day-to-day cowardice of life” (27). Thus, rather than directly labelling the white settlers as the perpetrators and the Aboriginal people as the victims, Scott uses these ordinary white characters to indicate the evilness of their mind-sets. For example, Chaine’s very first thoughts about the land are “empty” and “trackless” as if the whole land has been “waiting for him” to “take up land” (10). It is also stated that when he arrives in the land, he brings “money and stock, tools and enterprise” (10), and he is determined to make a living for himself and his family. The difference between ‘living’ and ‘making a living’ should be emphasised in this context because Chaine strives to *make* a living with “the force of his will and his energy” (217). In order to accomplish his plans, he constructs strategic relationships with the natives, and plans his actions conscientiously. As it is stated in the novel,

> Chaine knows what he wants. Profits, not prophets. Knows what he wants done because he writes it down first. Some of it, leastways. Him and his lists. They will build a stand for the try-pot; they will make a garden, then tend and weed it. They spread pitch on the boats the Yankees left them. They shepherd sheep, make fences to keep sheep in and kangaroos out. (*That Deadman* 209)

Chaine is driven by economic profit, therefore, imposes European forms of management on the Australian land in order to gain power and construct a sustainable British settlement. Within the colonial mind, "[n]ature was there to be disciplined and regulated, harness to the imperative of imperial development" (Adams, "Nature" 43). However, these impositions on natural environments disturb not only the power dynamics but also the balance of the land and its inhabitants. Furthermore, the imposed forms of European environmental management can be defined as ecological imperialism, which is "a specific manifestation of anthropocentric thought" and "the systematic exploitation and re-shaping of the local ecosystems of the peripheries for the economic welfare of the centre" (Opperman 181). Hence, Chaine's authority and ambition allows the seemingly insignificant and harmless changes that actually create an immense disturbance in the Australian land through the European way of administrating nature and the introduction of fences, farms, institutions, and buildings.

Furthermore, altering the balance of the natural environment through importing foreign products and tools, and replacing the natural fauna and flora are other forms of environmental expansion of Europe under the name of 'development.' In addition to Chaine, the Governor plays an important role in this process and contributes to Chaine's goal for 'civilising' the land through agricultural 'development' for profit. The Governor comes to the land with "a wife, nine children, servants (two black boys among them), sheep, bullock, chickens… he had a longer list than Mr. Chaine! The new governor-resident brought so much with him that he needed a second ship. Fruit trees and tools and wheelbarrows and glass panes and mirrors, too…" (122). The mentality that sees the lack of European influence in a land as the 'backwardness' of that land can be observed through Governor and his two-ship worth of imported European products. He not only advances the environmental expansion of Europe in Australia, but also ensures the so-called 'development' and 'civilisation' to the land. Within this context, Huggan and Tiffin suggest that,

> once invasion and settlement had been accomplished, or at least once administrative structures had been set up, the environmental impacts of western attitudes to human being-in-the-world were facilitated or reinforced by the deliberate (or accidental) transport of animals, plants and peoples

> throughout the European empires, instigating widespread ecosystem change under conspicuously unequal power regimes. (6)

The Governor, hence, contributes to the environmental expansion of Europe through his imports. European imports of flora and fauna, and tools to newly settled colonies were regarded as necessary impositions for an 'uncivilised' land and its 'inessential' inhabitants and were presented as gifts. Gaynor argues that "[t]he extensive environmental change wrought during the nineteenth century rested, perhaps most obviously, on the dominant colonial understanding that the indigenous people did not possess the land, which was therefore available for Europeans to occupy and use" (93). Therefore, within the colonial mind, this widespread ecological change was rationalised under the idea of necessary 'development.' However, not only these impositions disturbed the balance of the colonised land's environments but they were also imposed on the indigenous population as 'gifts' that the more 'civilised' people had the audacity to give them. Moreover, the foreign impositions on the land disturbed the natural balance and Australia's ecosystem. Adams states that historically,

> [a] wide range of temperate and Mediterranean crops and fruits were imported to Australia by naturalisation or acclimatisation societies, and with them came a wide spectrum of accidental arrivals. Some brought diseases that wiped out local competitors, others ran wild (such as horses, donkeys, cattle, camels and the water buffalo, among domestic livestock alone); some propagated prodigiously, reaching plague proportions (for example, the European rabbit in Australia or the red deer in New Zealand). ("Nature" 21)

Therefore, it might be stated that the colonial ideas and discourses of nature justified these devastating repercussions as long as the colonisers continued to profit and the land continued to reach their demands. The colonised's existence in the land is denied and the land is regarded as underdeveloped, therefore, the dominion of nature is 'naturalised' by the colonisers. Both the land and its inhabitants are seen as the Other, "whose prior ownership of the land and whose dispossession and murder is never spoken or admitted" (Plumwood, *Environmental* 104). Hence, the balance of the natural environment of colonised lands are regarded as the periphery and the European imports of flora and fauna are placed in the centre.

Furthermore, the Governor moves to the Farm and many people from the settlement visit the place “for a special occasion of flag raising and firing guns and planting trees” (126). Hence, the Farm, which has been constructed under the supervision of Chaine, becomes a place for the white settlers to create an imaginary border where they can claim territory and reinforce their power. The Farm is also the heart of the agricultural development planned by the settlers. The Governor, then, takes this environmental expansion a step further, and proudly plants a tree, a Norfolk Pine, in the Farm. His pride can be observed in his speech where he talks about the tree he planted through these words: “Although it was only small, you could see the storybook shape of it already” (126). This act of planting a tree in the Farm is in fact significant. As Huggan and Tiffin argue, “[t]he genuinely natural ways of indigenous ecosystems were irretrievably undone as ‘wild’ lands were cleared for farming or opened up to pastoralism” (8). Correspondingly, the Governor is confident that this small action he is taking currently will be remembered years later. With the Governor’s request, Bobby helps him dig the soil and plant the tree. Bobby is only a child during this occasion, a child who “never learned fear; not until he was pretty well a grown man did he ever even know” (48). As an old man, pride transformed into regret and guilt in Bobby; as he retells the stories of his youth to the tourist years later, “he would tell the tourists to go look at that towering tree and shake his head. I was only a little boy, he said” (127). Bobby, therefore, realises as an old man that what he did as a child, and what his people allowed unknowingly, affected their natural environment for years.

After a while, agricultural development failed to meet the European settlers’ greed for profit. As a result, they turned their heads to another environmental treasure that they could take advantage, which is whale hunting. According to Chaine, “[w]haling was better than attempting to work this land with its topsy-turvy seasons and poor soil, and there’d be trouble with the natives, farming. The best land was their best land, too” (195). Agricultural development needed a lot of time and labour, neither of which the settlers were prepared to sacrifice. On the other hand, whaling meant wealth because “[t]he Industrial Revolution in Britain had given rise to an insatiable demand for whale oil” (Gaynor 275). Historically, prior to the 1820s and 1830 in Australia, the sales of agricultural products declined, which resulted in the exploitation of the sea rather than

the land, and consequently “whale product exports increased substantially to become the prime export commodities” (Butlin 104). Whale hunting, therefore, became a widespread occupation on the Australian shores.

Although whale hunting was also a practice done by the Aboriginal people, the novel clearly emphasises the two cultures’ different approaches to nature and animals. Nature is a source for both cultures; however, the difference is that for Aboriginal people it is a survival source which they respect and do not abuse. Their relationship with nature is harmonious, they value nature as their equal. Anthropologist Nancy Williams argues that their knowledge and spirituality allows Aboriginal people to “regard the environment as sentient and as communicating with them” (qtd. in Langton 93). Bobby, for example, feels like he is related to the whales, “he heard the whales singing. They sang for him” (196). They are connected to the ocean and to the animals: “Menak sensed something familiar with the depths of ocean, something hardly aware of its own self’s deep pulse until some melody and rhythm and baited light lured it up to air and sunlight and close to him… A whale” (175). For the Aboriginal people, nature is alive, and they are able to communicate with it.

As a result, it can be stated that the Aboriginal people are the representatives of animism while the Europeans are the representatives of anthropocentrism. As environmental philosopher J. BairdCallicott points out, in animism, “[t]hese entities possessed a consciousness, reason, and volition, no less intense and complete than a human being’s. The Earth itself, the sky, the winds, rocks, streams, trees, insects, birds and all other animals therefore had personalities and were thus as fully persons as other human beings” (qtd. in Garrard 121). Thus, animism considers nature as equal to humans. According to it, neither nature nor humans have a superiority, that is why they must co-exist peacefully. Bill Neigjie, an Aboriginal philosopher describes this relationship as, “[e]arth… like your father or brother or mother, because you [are] born from earth. That’s your bone, your blood. It’s in this earth, same as for tree” (qtd. in Plumwood, *Environmental Culture* 226). Everything in nature has a spirit just like humans, and therefore, the natural environment should not be harmed. Thus, for the Aboriginal people, nature cannot be separated from culture.

Anthropocentrism, on the other hand, is a 'human-centred' ideology. It is a discourse that "assumes prioritisation of humans and human interests over those of other species on earth" which excludes natural environment and ranks humans as privileged (Huggan and Tiffin 5-6). Contrary to Aboriginal people, Europeans separate nature from humans and claim the superiority of the latter. Adams points out that "nature came to be understood not purely as something distinct from society, but somehow in opposition to culture, the city and industry, to technology and human work. Nature was wild, unrestricted, magnificently unknown" ("Nature" 34). It is common to encounter this ideology in many societies, especially in Western societies. As Plumwood argues, Western traditions are highly influenced by anthropocentrism, which allows people to "develop conceptions of themselves as belonging to a superior sphere apart, a rational sphere of exclusively 'human' ethics, technology and culture dissociated from nature and ecology" (*Environmental Culture* 99). This ideology supports the distinction that claims humans, specifically Europeans, as "the One" and nature and everything that is related to nature, including indigenous peoples, as "the Other" (Plumwood, *Environmental Culture* 19). The Other is perceived as the inferior, which invites the One "to control, contain, and otherwise govern (through superior knowledge and accommodating power) the Other" (Said 48). Anthropocentrism, therefore, puts humans above nature by 'othering' environmental elements and creates a discourse that claims humans as masters of natural environments.

These two completely different perspectives towards nature and life in general construct a barrier between the cultures, which averts a mutual understanding. When this lack of understanding is combined with the superiority complex of the white colonisers, an atmosphere that lacks respect is created. The settlers' lack of ability to comprehend the cultural differences about views towards nature is explained in the novel through this quotation:

> Wunyeran had politely sat through several church services and now, broken English interspersed with his own language and again with song, he expressed something of his elder brothers the kangaroos, and that trees or whales or fish might also be family. Or so Cross understood. The sun was

> their mother… Cross's face showed he did not understand. (*That Deadman* 94)

For the Aboriginal culture, nature is not separate from human culture. They are connected and interdependent like a family. What Wunyeran is trying to say is better explained by Bob Randall, a Yankunytjatjara[11] elder, in an interview with *Global Oneness Project*. Randall explains how the connectedness of the Aboriginal people to their natural surroundings differs from the European culture's approach as follows:

> We just lived on the land as the people of the land… My people see land ownership as being totally different to the English way of ownership. Really, *the land owns us*. You kind of feel you are living with family when you include everything that is alive in that space and you can never feel lonely… How can you when all around you is family members from this ground up to all the trees around you to the clouds hanging up around you, the birds flying by, the animals and reptiles that are just hidden in the shrub. It does not push anyone out but brings everyone in. ("The Land Owns Us" n.p) (emphasis mine)

This nature/culture relationship is embodied by the indigenous Aboriginal people and passed on through generations, whereas anthropocentric discourses are taught as the truth in European cultures. This cultural difference between them about their perspective upon natural environment also represents their attitude towards it. Not only their possession of land has a completely different discourse, but also Europeans are reluctant to learn or follow indigenous understanding of nature. According to Gaynor, this lack of interest is the result of European "hubris and greed" which "caused much nineteenth-century environmental devastation" (93). As a result, anthropocentric discourses tried to justify the human-centred worldview of Europeans, which caused the destruction of the natural environments of colonised lands through claiming the superiority of human beings over nature.

Consequently, whale hunting enterprise becomes a popular way of exploiting nature among the white men. In fact, "[c]olonial enthusiasm for the large-scale re-ordering of nature is seen most clearly in the area of water resources" (Adams, "Nature" 23).

[11] Indigenous Aboriginal community located in South Australia.

Furthermore, in the novel, not only British, but also American whalers start to hunt on Australian shores. Boats are always on the sea, and the hunters are always ready to slaughter. As Gaynor states, "whaling was a source of pride as well as profit; the morality of the industry was not questioned" (276). Consequently, the whale hunting is practiced by white men to a point of extinction. Chaine, for example, now "was all for whale fishing, and left less time for building things and laying good foundations" (201). Whales are being hunted by the white settlers in such an excessive number that after a while, it comes to a point where "there [are] no whales" (249) at all. Correspondingly, Gaynor points out that in the nineteenth century, after the whaling industry was established by the colonial officers in Australia,

> [i]n 1839 alone, Van Diemen's Land whalers took more than 1,000 southern right whales […] Between 1828 and 1850 whalers registered in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land alone took more than 11,700 southern right whales. Thereafter, reduced populations, along with economic factors, all but finished shore whaling in eastern Australian waters. A recent study suggests that southern right whale populations have still not re-established their distribution prior to the advent of commercial southern whaling in the late eighteenth century. (277)

Therefore, it can be stated that whaling, historically, was actually an enterprise done in an excessive amount and has had devastating impacts on our ecological balance. As Opperman reminds, "the acts of ecological mastery over nature in the colonised lands" cannot be denied because "their consequences continue to affect the entire planet today" (180). Acts of ecological mastery like whaling were legitimatised because nature and animals were considered as dispensable tools, existing only with the purpose of serving human needs. This eventually resulted in their endless exploitation as they were regarded only as a replenishable resource.

The extinction of whales influences the Aboriginal people due to their close connection to the land and environment. As a matter of fact, Bobby's close relationship with nature, his oneness with his land are undeniable. As it is stated in the novel, "[h]e'd come from the ocean that same way [as a whale] and been borne by the wind like a bird. Now he was earth and stone" (128). Also, it is clearly emphasised that for Bobby, separation from his natural environment is stressful, "[s]uch a closed-in life made Bobby ill, and

for a long time he saw the trees and sky only through the frame of a window or doorway. He could not breath properly, and the wind moaned with a voice that might almost have been his ailing own, circling his head" (18). Bobby, within this framework, represents the Aboriginal people's perspective towards nature and their inseparableness. The Aboriginal people's attitude towards nature, therefore, is nurturant. Merchant states that "Aboriginal communities relate to nature as if it were an ecological self that has intrinsic value. This approach likewise entails an ethic of care and compassion" (*Earthcare* 186). Likewise, Bobby's connection to whales is emphasised from the very beginning of the novel: "He was not much more than a baby when he first saw whales rolling between him and the island" but now as an old man "there was no whale" anymore and Bobby tries to imagine and remember the old stories and songs (1). Disappearance of the whales is the turning point for Bobby to understand the destructive impact of the white settlers, whom he once considered as friends and allies.

As these expansions continued, the power balance between the Aboriginal people and the settlers changed. The primary position of the Aboriginals as the high-numbered confident community diminished due to the decrease in population and the changes in their natural environment which had a negative impact on their food sources. As the white settlers gained more strength, especially population-wise, they started to abuse their power. Chaine is one of the most important characters for this, as it can be understood from his following words: "When I first arrived at this place, […], we were on friendly terms with the natives, although they were largely disrespectful of our habits and considered their right to enter our huts to be equal of our own. And they were very numerous. I was the first settler to make a stand against them in this regard" (254). The diseases weakened the indigenous people both physically and spiritually; meanwhile the expanding settlement, agricultural development, and the extinction of whales reduced the chances of survival in their own natural environment. In addition to the survival struggles, the connection they had with their natural environment was altered. That is why, it might be stated that the disturbance in their land was perceived like an attack on their family members. As a result, conflicts between these two cultures arise. White settlers' camps and gardens began to be raided by the Aboriginal people for food supplies. As a matter of fact, historically, Aboriginal resistance for territory and

competition for food increased highly in the 1830s. As Mar and Edmonds explain, “Noongar people pushed from their lands were starving and began taking stock and raiding farms” (350). The Aboriginal people recognised their actions as righteous. Menak is aware that the whale situation was created by the white settlers. For this reason, he gets so angry that he refuses to even speak tongue. Therefore, Bobby translates his words to the white settlers as follows: “My people need their share of these sheep, too. We share the whales, you camp on our land and kill our kangaroos and tear up our trees and dirty our water and we forgive, but now you will not share your sheep and my people are hungry and wait here because of you” (242). Menak’s words influence Bobby as he realises that the point Menak is making is absolutely true, his people’s and his land’s sufferings are caused by his white ‘friends.’

In order to control and restrain “the native problem” (262), Chaine and the Governor argue that “steps must be taken” through military and police forces because “their [the Aboriginal people’s] numbers are not so much” anymore (254). Hence, laws that are constituted by the settlers began to be implemented on the Aboriginal people. Laws such as the ones that forced the natives to “be clothed and without spears if they were to enter town” (260) are enforced and those who do not abide by are being punished by the repressive police forces. The Aboriginal people began to be restricted to walk freely or to enter certain places of their own land. Similarly, Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur in 1828 issued a Proclamation which divided the land into two, settled and unsettled; and restricted the entrance of the Aboriginal people into the settled areas without their permission (Mar and Edmonds 346). Therefore, through these rules and restrictions, the white settlers took control of the indigenous people like they took control of their natural environment, since in the white settlers’ eyes, “the Other must always hear and adapt to the One, and never the other way around” (Plumwood, *Environmental Culture* 19). ‘The Other’ within this context includes both the Aboriginal people and their natural environment. Macintyre further explains that “[t]he Aborigines had tried through negotiation and exchange to incorporate the Europeans into their ways, but the Europeans had little desire to assimilate into Aboriginal society” (65). Hence, rather than adapting themselves to the Australian land, the white settlers altered the natural environment and imposed rules and restrictions for their own benefit and profit.

Therefore, neither the indigenous people nor the natural environment is free from the British imperialist and anthropocentric discourses.

Despite everything, Bobby is still hopeful to create a peaceful co-existence between his people and the settlers. He is confident in himself as he "knew he could sing and dance the spirit of this place… by those means and his spirit he would show them how people must live here, together" (278). On this account, Bobby comes up with a plan, and gives a touching and a soulful speech to find common grounds and solve all the conflicts. He aims to act as a looking glass, as a mirror to show the settlers' behaviours to themselves. He starts his speech by addressing everyone in the audience as follows: "My friends, you here are all my friends, *blackfellas* and *whitefellas* I hear people saying, but we are not just our colour" (279) with an intent to undermine the settlers' 'othering' attempt, and continues by stating the struggles of his people and the reasons for it by saying:

> [T]oo many strangers wanna take things for themselves and leave nothing. Whales nearly all gone now, and the men that kill them they gone away, too, and now we can't even walk up river away from the sea in cold rainy time. Gotta walk around fences and guns, and sheep and bullock get the goodest water. They messing up the water, cutting the earth. What, we can't kill and eat them? And we now strangers to our special places. (279-80)

He points out the impacts of the settlers' actions on the environment and how those actions have affected him and his people. The new technologies and products are imposed upon them, which alters the whole way of living for the Aboriginal people. For a long time, Bobby was willing to accommodate to the new cultural forms and was happy to be a part of their lifestyles but now he realises how different their perspectives are in terms of nature and culture, and how these new enterprises are in fact separating them from their land. Through his speech, Bobby points out the cultural artefacts that are introduced and imposed upon them by the white settlers such as clothes, boots, hats, which are in fact constructing a barrier between his culture and his nature:

> These shoes… These shoes might stop me feel the dirt I tread. He stepped lightly out of the shoes, and left them balanced on their toes. Sand can hold my feet instead… Take this hat… Why wear this hat? Clouds around my head just like a mountaintop. I want shade? Slip beneath the big trees, slow

> down, stop... He took off his jacket and, dancing across the room as if with a ballroom partner, left it buttoned below the hat. A human form was taking shape… My shirt… No shirt means the wind and sun caress you better. (280)

Within this scope, it can be argued that Bobby no longer wants to be identified with the white people's customs and cultures. He is aware that their way of living disturbs not only the environment but also the bond his people have with their natural environment. This separation between the indigenous people and their land is neither acknowledged nor noticed by the settlers. As Plumwood argues, "[t]hey [the colonisers] failed completely to understand the relationship between Aboriginal people and the land they took, or to recognise indigenous management practices" (*Environmental Culture* 118). Eurocentric and anthropocentric discourses allowed colonisers to deny the Aboriginal people's deep spiritual connection with their land and also to regard them as 'primitive nomads' who were ecologically passive.

Bobby's attempts of storytelling, dancing, and singing to find common grounds, actually, do not work. It ends with Bobby's anxiety about his failure, but throughout the novel there are glimpses to the future when Bobby is an old man and re-telling all these stories to tourists and visitors. Kim Scott, in an interview, expresses that the reason why the novel has glimpses of future Bobby from the very beginning as follows: "If I had the old storyteller at the end he would certainly appear defeated. Having his storytelling early like that, and then a little glimpse - when he is talking about defeat - a little glimpse of his attempts to work with language (that he gave up on) is enough" (qtd. in Brewster 233). For Scott, the last page where Bobby gives his speech is not the end. What happens to him after that, decades later, is also important. The non-linear plot of the novel supports this by giving a sense of continuity. Young Bobby's inner conflicts which are represented throughout the narrative, develops the Old Bobby's attitudes and judgements. Old Bobby is still playful, but with a heavy heart. The young boy who says "our river, our home" (156) has been transformed into a man who says "me and my people, my people and I" (76). Old Bobby is still not resentful or hateful, but he is rather disappointed. His disappointment can be clearly observed in his words: "We thought making friends was the best thing, and never knew that when we took your

flour and sugar and tea and blankets that we'd lose everything of ours. We learned your words and songs and stories, and never knew you didn't want to hear ours" (76). The land he and his ancestors have been attached to for hundreds of years has been taken from them; not only his culture, traditions, and language but also his natural environment which he is deeply connected to has perished. In relation to this, Old Bobby states that

> I am the only Noongar alive today who is mentioned in Dr Cross's papers, published in your own mother country. Your mother country, he said to the tourists, not mine because my country is here, and belonged to my father, and his father, and his father before him, too. But look at me now you wouldn't think that, not with all these people in their fine houses and noses in their rum who got no time to thank me or share what they have. (76)

The loss of connection creates a more troublesome issue apart from the struggle for food, because "indigenous cultures in Australia regard land not just as a physical resource, but as a social resource" (Langton 94). For the Aboriginal people, the land is more than a resource to supply physical materials, but it has a social and even spiritual value. It still remains as a struggle for survival, but the separation from their natural environments damages their sense of identity and creates a starvation for spiritual balance.

In conclusion, this cross-cultural relationship which started in a 'friendly' manner eventually turns into a melancholic story. Kim Scott, in *That Deadman Dance*, represents this melancholy through Bobby, whose position as the representative of Aboriginal culture and its natural environment is reduced to "an old man strutting around with his boots and gun" (49). The gradual process of biological and environmental expansion of Europe happened through diseases that weakened the Aboriginal people by decreasing their population, agricultural development which destroyed the balance of the ecosystem by replacing the natural flora and fauna with European products and stocks, and the disappearance of the once flourishing whale population in the Australian shores. Supported by the anthropocentric discourse and white superiority complex, these expansions caused the European dominion in Australia and strengthened the 'othering' process of Aboriginal people.

CONCLUSION

"Let no one say the past is dead.
The past is all about us and within.
Haunted by tribal memories, I know
This little now, this accidental present
Is not all of me, whose long making
Is so much of the past" (Oodgeroo Noonuccal "The Past" 1-6).

Exploitation of nature and its inhabitants has an important place in European imperialism. Postcolonial ecocriticism, within this sense, emphasises this relationship by "narrowing the ecological gap between coloniser and colonised" (Tiffin and Hugan 2). By bringing together postcolonial studies and ecological studies, postcolonial ecocriticism highlights the dominating imperialist discourses that disturb the balance of natural environments of the colonised lands, and consequently its inhabitants. The impact of imperialism upon natural environments cannot be denied, and should not be overlooked, as the devastating repercussions of those actions still resonate to this day. In addition to this, literature plays a significant role in representing the impact of imperialism on colonised lands and indigenous people. Australian literature, likewise, can shed light to the silenced past of Australia by establishing the relationship between Aboriginal people and Europeans and their contact with nature and each other. It can serve as a tool to represent how the Aboriginal people were treated and how the disturbances in their land affected them, and in fact, continue to affect them. In relation to these points, this thesis offers an analysis of ecological concerns embedded in two Australian postcolonial works, namely Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* (2005) and Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance* (2012) within the framework of postcolonial ecocriticism by focusing on how these novels represent the environmental aspects of imperialism.

In fact, both of the novels clearly demonstrate that within the colonial mind-set, nature and humans were two separate things. Nature was regarded as a commodity that can be reconstructed and re-ordered to serve humans, thus, "the rational management of nature as a natural resource" was developed excessively in the colonial context (Adams,

"Nature" 26). Therefore, manipulation and controlling of land, which was considered as an under-developed wilderness, became a common practice. Settler colonies such as Australia were more exposed to this imposition on the natural environment and to the 'othering' of the non-human world. Aboriginal people's harmonious relationship with nature, their hunter-gatherer lifestyles, and their close connection to their surroundings enabled the white settlers to regard them as a part of the natural environment, which provoked the idea that claimed Aboriginal people as less of a human and more of an animal in the settlers' minds. Plumwood asserts that this denial of the colonisers is "[t]he inability to see humans as ecological and embodied beings" because "[h]umans are seen as the only rational species, the only real subjectivities and actors in the world, and nature is a background substratum which is acted upon in ways we do not usually need to pay careful attention to after we have taken what we want of it" (*Environmental Culture* 19). This mind-set not only allowed white colonisers to consider nature as a product, but also to ignore the existence of Aboriginal people's claim of the land and allowed the gradual disposition of their natural environment and population. Not only the Aboriginal people were considered as non-human agents but also they were persistently forced to align themselves with the western views of the environment.

The power of colonialism relies on the power of the dominant spheres. However, as Foucault asserts, "power is not an institution" (93) but there are "institutions of power" (141). These institutions enable the "maintenance of production relations, the rudiments of anatomo and bio-politics, created in the eighteenth century as techniques of power present at every level of the social body and utilised by every diverse institutions, operated in the sphere of economic process, their development, and the forces working to sustain them" (Foucault 141). The success of colonialism is indeed political and economic and is based on a strategic power relationship; however, it also relies on the biological and environmental mastery. For the Aboriginal people, the European power over the indigenous population was closely connected with the European power over their natural environment. White settlers, due to their lack of knowledge and interest in the environment and in the Aboriginal management of the land, by imposing European administration of the land, by importing tools, products, technologies, by promoting animal hunting, deforesting, and agricultural development, by transmitting infectious

and fatal diseases, and by replacing the natural flora and fauna, disturbed the balance of the ecosystem for the sake of their own economic and political profits, and eventually marginalised the natural environment and its habitants and broke the harmonious connection between them. This thesis, therefore, emphasises the fact that anthropocentric discourses and imperialism are inseparably connected with each other and British dominion of Australia depended on these ideologies that allowed the biological and environmental expansions.

In the first chapter, Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* is analysed in order to discuss the white settlers' ideologies and discourses which affected the environment of Australia and the Aboriginal people in a negative way. It is important to emphasise the intentions of Grenville, as a white Australian, by writing about Australia's colonial past. It is obvious from the novel that what she was trying to accomplish was to depict the erroneous sides of her ancestors' mind-sets and discourses. The focal of the novel is on the settler side; their ideas, wishes, and ideologies are in the foreground. By revising the settler identity, Grenville points out the seemingly harmless ideologies that the white settlers had and implanted, and how these ideologies constituted certain actions that should not be justified. The settlers' attempt to claim the land by 'othering' the nature and indigenous people is represented through Thornhill, whose mind-set gradually allows him to 'own' the land by buying, marking, clearing, and working the land and by turning it into a property. The idea of 'private property' is the main foundation that the settlers base their claim and justify their actions. The Aboriginal people's connection and devotion to the land is highlighted in the novel. However, this nature/culture relationship and the Aboriginal people's lack of interest in private property encourage the white settlers to 'take up land' and to marginalise the indigenous people as the 'trespassers.'

The conflict between colonisers and environment is due to the settlers' benightedness and apathy about the land, which constructs the idea that claims the Australian land as a wilderness to overcome. This belief prevents them from having a harmonious co-existence. In the settlers' eyes, the 'everlasting forest' becomes a foreign and a formidable obstacle that withholds them from constructing a 'civilised' life. This fear of

nature is also projected towards Aboriginal people, whose coherence with nature is undeniable. They are regarded as a part of nature and even likened to animals, ergo, their individuality is denied as non-human subjects. Since they are reduced to a level that lacks certain mental and rational abilities that humans have (within the anthropocentric mind-set of the colonisers), they are considered as inferior. This belief not only caused the balance of the environment to be disturbed, but also was used as an instrument to justify the massacre of its inhabitants.

In the second chapter, the effects of settler colonialism on the Australian land and its inhabitants are analysed through Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance*, in which he wrote about the contact between the white colonisers and the indigenous people from the Aboriginal focus point. Scott's main concern, similar to Grenville, is the colonial mind-sets of the white settler, however, the Aboriginal presence in the novel is in the foreground. Scott's main argument in the novel can be suggested as the fact that the British claim of Australia was not an instant conquering, but it was rather a slow process of biological and environmental expansion and building the foundations of a permanent settlement and making the land a British property by constructing an economic infrastructure through transforming the natural resources of the land into capitals. This process resulted in a huge alternance of the natural environment which destroyed the balance of the land in an irrecoverable way. Colonising culture promoted environmental changes in colonised lands, as they were considered as under-developed, colonisers imported European products, such as humans, animals, and plants, which were regarded as essential requirements or replacements of the already existing wilderness (Huggan and Tiffin 7). In addition, colonised lands were regarded as open resources that contributed to the progress of European industry. As Beinart and Hughes argue, "[i]n British imperial thinking, more intensive utilisation of land was often thought of as improvement and progress: it had both an economic and moral purpose. In economic history written about empire, land is often referred to as under-utilised" (13). Therefore, with the intention of profit and economic welfare, the natural environments of the colonies were regarded as raw material and were dominated. *That Deadman Dance* offers an examination of the destructive impacts of European imperialism's biological and environmental expansion on the Australian land and its inhabitants to

benefit from the so-called ‘raw materials.’ Newly introduced environmental managements for agricultural development, extinction of whales due to excessive hunting, and infectious diseases that reduce the Aboriginal people’s population benefited the colonisers’ objectives while constructing catastrophic consequences for both the environment and its inhabitants. The Aboriginal people were not only weakened spiritually and physically, but also eventually dispossessed from their own lands.

In *That Deadman Dance*, as the white settlers continue their expeditions to more fertile soils with the purpose of agriculture, the Aboriginal people are displaced from their own land and their natural food sources are damaged. As the diseases that Europeans brought continue to infect the Aboriginal people, their population decreases and they lose the advantage of being high-numbered; and as the whale hunting enterprise eradicates the whale population and causes an extinction, the natural balance of the land is disturbed. Bobby, within this framework, represents both his people and his land. His spiritual connection to nature and his confidence in his heritage that he considers indestructible slowly collapse as the settlers’ environmental and biological expansions expand. Kim Scott accomplishes this through frequent transitions of assertive and trusting young Bobby to wry old Bobby who appears to be completely separated from his own culture. By showing the ‘before and after,’ ‘back and forth’ throughout the novel, Scott illustrates the process of the Australian land’s utilisation by the white colonisers and the consequences of these operations on its inhabitants.

Moreover, it is important to emphasise the fact that the novels avoid stereotyping certain race with certain labels. There is no inclination that separates white people as antagonists and the Aboriginal people as the victims. It is clear that what the authors were pointing fingers were in fact the mind-sets that allowed and justified these destructive actions. Neither the white nor the Aboriginal characters are stereotyped into one category. Grenville’s protagonist Thornhill, for example, is not represented as an evil character, but an ordinary man who is influenced by anthropocentric discourses; Blackwood is represented as a well-intentioned, sympathetic person; Smasher, on the other hand, is characterised as a truly evil person who murders and rapes indigenous

people. Accordingly, the contact between the settlers and the Aboriginal people ranges from Blackwood's benignity to Smasher's cruelty. Likewise, Kim Scott's white characters support this. Neither Dr Cross nor Chaine is characterised as the villains, but rather they are represented as people who interiorise the colonial mind-set of Europe. As a Noongar himself, Scott's objectivity is important in this sense, because his characterisation does not aim to accuse certain people, but to condemn the colonial ideologies that caused the devastation of the Australian land and its inhabitants. Therefore, attributing a specific trait to a single race is something both authors avoid. Instead, what they suggest is that a person is bad because of the decisions s/he makes or the ideology that they hide behind, not because of their skin colour or nationality. Grenville's diverse characterisation and Scott's objectivity emphasise this fact.

It can also be argued that the novels do not assert the white's victory over the Aboriginal people's defeat, or vice versa. Kate Grenville, for example, at the end of the novel, by pointing out Thornhill's agitation as he stares at the forest thinking of the Aboriginal people "could still be up there, in the intricate landscape that defeated any white man – still there, prepared to wait" (333) makes the presence of the Aboriginal people in the land fully felt. The tension Thornhill feels is due to his knowledge that the Aboriginal people have the "capacity for standing in the landscape and simply being" (333). This underlines the fact that the white settlers' so called 'success' did not ensure the Aboriginal people's defeat. Kim Scott's narrative and the nonlinear plot of the novel, likewise, give a sense of a story which has not finished yet. By means of the shifts between the dates and between Young Bobby and Old Bobby, *That Deadman Dance* creates an optimistic ending. Rather than concluding with Bobby's defeat, and consequently the Aboriginal people's defeat, Scott emphasises the existence of Aboriginal people and their experiences and creates a sense of a possibility of a hopeful future for this story and the generation after Bobby.

Environmental crises have become one of the most important problems of the twenty-first century. Postcolonial ecocritical researches prove that the impacts of the European colonisers' mistreatment of nature and its inhabitants during the colonial period have an immense effect on today's environmental problems. The twenty-first century is the time

period of environmental crisis, therefore more attention should be given to this subject matter. As Huggan and Tiffin point out, "[p]ostcolonial studies has come to understand environmental issues not only as central to the projects of European conquest and global domination, but also as inherent in the ideologies of imperialism and racism on which those projects historically – and persistently – depend" (6). Hence, by highlighting the environmental disturbance, which is created by colonialism, cultural studies and postcolonial ecocritical theory can achieve the goal of raising consciousness for this issue. That is why, the aim of this thesis was to analyse postcolonial novels that have environmental issues in them. There are many canonical Australian postcolonial novels such as David Malouf's *Remembering Babylon* (1993) and Doris Pilkington's *Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence* (1996), written by Aboriginal people and discuss the negative impacts of British colonialism in Australia. Postcolonial literature mostly focuses on social and political aspects of colonialism and identity crises of the colonised people. However, the literary works in this thesis, namely Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* and Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance* have been selected with the intention of discussing environmental issues of Australia's colonial history, as both of them are very rich in this subject. However, within the framework of cultural studies and postcolonial ecocritical theory, literary works written by authors from other countries than Australia that have been exposed to European colonialism can also be read and analysed from this perspective. As a matter of fact, an analysis of other colonies' postcolonial works, like Indian, Irish or Caribbean postcolonial literature that have environmental concerns, may differ completely from Australian colonial experience and examining the relationship between different lands and their inhabitants can create a totally different perspective.

In conclusion, both Kate Grenville and Kim Scott give great importance to the environmental issues that are caused by European imperialism in Australia and Aboriginal people's place in the natural environment. The relationship between nature and culture is highly emphasised in both *The Secret River* and *That Deadman Dance*. Separating nature from culture and isolating it from human experience by claiming the superiority of humans over nature were nothing more than means of justification of the exploitation of nature in the colonised lands. The social concepts and ideologies of white colonisers rationalised the exploitation and destruction of settler colonies' natural

environments and disturbed the Aboriginal people’s sense of belonging. The importance of nature and its inhabitants in the European colonial history deserves more attention. In the end, it is important to recognise the significance of nature in the human culture. Only then, the separative discourses that have been around for centuries can be transformed and a harmonious relationship between nature and humans can be achieved.

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İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA

Tarih: 28/07/2021

Tez Başlığı: Avustralya Romanında Doğanın Ötekileştirilmesi: Kate Grenville'in *The Secret River* ve Kim Scott'un *That Deadman Dance* Eserlerinin Sömürgecilik Sonrası Eko-eleştirel Okuması

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